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Marty: Nets 'conflict' could cost Dolly job

 By Jess Wisloski
 The Brooklyn Papers

Borough President Marty Markowitz said this week that depending on the results of a determination by the city's Conflicts of Interest Board, his appointment to the City Planning Commission will either have to divest of her interest in the New Jersey Nets or resign from the commission.

Markowitz said he had expected to hear from the conflicts board on Oct. 1, but at press time no determination had been handed down.

His comments, made during a question-and-answer session at the Park Slope Food Co-op last Saturday, marked the first time the borough president directly addressed the notion that Williams might have to step down.

Williams, who for 25 years has owned A. Williams Trucking and Trenching with her husband, Adonijah Williams, is among the long list of investors in developer Bruce Ratner's Nets basketball team. Her ownership status was revealed by The Brooklyn Papers in August.

Though no evidence has been found as to when she and her husband purchased their share in the Nets — estimated to be worth about \$1 million — Markowitz asserted this week that it was purchased



Borough President Marty Markowitz at last month's Atlantic Antic.

NOT JUST NETS

More development coverage on pages 6 and 16

long before the plans by Ratner's company, Forest City Ratner, were made public. Those plans include construction of a 19,000-seat arena for the Nets, 4,500 residential units, a plethora of retail space and 17 office towers reaching as high as 60 stories on more than 21 acres of public and privately held land stretching into Prospect Heights from the intersection of Atlantic and Flatbush avenues.

"When I appointed Dolly Williams, this project wasn't even a thought in my head or in anybody's head," Markowitz said at the food co-op on Union Street on Oct. 2. He said he didn't have the power to force her off the commission, but that pending a determination by the Conflicts of Interest Board, he might have to enforce a recommended decision.

"If the conflicts of interest board rules that she has a role," said Markowitz, "it will be determined that she either has to divest or resign."

In an uncharacteristically frank statement about this controversy, he said he couldn't help Williams keep her position if she disagreed with the ruling.

"If they rule that she does, I need someone who

See MARTY on page 16



Pumpkin pickers

Doing some pre-Halloween heavy lifting exercises at last Saturday's Montague Street Fair are Brianna Kahn, and Ryan Kahn, both 5, and Jenna Kahn, 10.

Daughtry breaks with 'God Squad'

Boerum Hill minister cuts a deal with Ratner as P'Heights leaders ask: Who speaks for 'community'?

 By Jess Wisloski
 and Neil Sloane
 The Brooklyn Papers

Announcements of benefits agreements being forged between Forest City Ratner and the "community" over the development company's plan to build a basketball arena, office towers and apartment buildings in Prospect Heights left many residents, activists and elected officials scratching their heads this week wondering, "Who is in this community and who represents it?"

On Thursday, Forest City Ratner principal owner Bruce Ratner held a press conference at the House of the Lord Church on Atlantic Avenue in Boerum Hill to

announce that the church's pastor, the Rev. Herbert Daughtry, was being included in negotiations over a community benefits agreement (CBA) that Ratner said would be legally binding.

The CBA would guarantee local hiring, job training and a health clinic as a result of the construction of Ratner's Atlantic Yards proposal. Ratner said the agreement would be formalized sometime next month.

"We're very pleased to be working with the Reverend Daughtry," said Ratner, calling him a "respected community leader," with 30 years of experience in the neighborhood.

Ratner added that the accomplishments of the negotiators would speak for themselves. "Words are easy, but let's see



Developer Bruce Ratner joins the Rev. Herbert Daughtry at Boerum Hill's House of the Lord Church on Atlantic Avenue, announcing Daughtry's role in a community benefits agreement for Ratner's Atlantic Yards project.

if we can really do what is right," Ratner said.

Daughtry resigned as chairman of the Downtown Brooklyn Leadership Coalition (DBLC) — often referred to as the "God Squad," because its leaders are largely comprised of clergymen — to negotiate with Ratner. The group has taken a harder line against Atlantic Yards, demanding the type of negotiating power Ratner might offer a business partner or prospective anchor tenant.

Ratner's Atlantic Yards would include a 19,000-seat basketball arena for the developer's recently purchased New Jersey Nets, three soaring office towers and 4,500 units of mixed-income housing on property bounded by Dean Street and Flatbush, Atlantic and Vanderbilt avenues in Prospect Heights. The site begins about four blocks, and across Flatbush Avenue, from Daughtry's Boerum Hill church.

But Daughtry's inclusion in the negotiations had residents in Prospect Heights, whose homes lie in the footprint of the proposed development, seething.

See DEALIN' on page 16

Hollywood red carpet will roll in Brooklyn

 By Jess Wisloski
 The Brooklyn Papers

They'll be rolling out the red carpet right here in Brooklyn.

Borough President Marty Markowitz said this week that the Brooklyn Museum will host a national movie premiere later this month for "Finding Neverland," a fantastical biopic based on the life of "Peter Pan" author J.M. Barrie.

The Miramax film stars Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet and Dustin Hoffman.

Markowitz has been waiting for at least two years — when Steven Spielberg's production company Dreamworks first pledged to open "Catch Me if You Can," or another film here — to get a full-fledged movie premiere in Brooklyn. That promise never materialized. Now Miramax has stepped in.

See MOVIE PREMIERE on page 18

Lights, camera, acción!

By Lisa J. Curtis
GO Brooklyn Editor

Save yourself the airfare and enjoy contemporary films from Mexico in Fort Greene. BAMcinematek is screening "MexicoNow," a collection of 13 movies, running through Oct. 17.

This Saturday, Oct. 9, "The Ruination of Men (La perdición de los hombres)," a black comedy about a man who is murdered and his two wives who battle for the rights to bury him will be screened at 2 pm, 4:30 pm, 6:50 pm and 9:15 pm. Arturo Ripstein, who got his start working under Luis Buñuel, directs this 16-mm Cinemascope flick which won best film at the 2000 San Sebastian Film Festival. (The poster of "Ruination" is pictured at left.)

Also included in the series is a five-film tribute to producer Bertha Navarro beginning with Guillermo Del Toro's vampire movie "Cronos" (1993) on Oct. 14. A Q&A with Navarro will follow this 7:30 pm screening.

BAMcinematek is located at 30 Lafayette Ave., at Ashland Place in Fort Greene. Tickets are \$10. For tickets go to the box office or call (718) 777-FILM. For more information, call (718) 636-4100 or visit the Web site at www.bam.org.

Council panels OK Ikea on Red Hook W'front

 By Jess Wisloski
 The Brooklyn Papers

When plans for a 360,000-square-foot Ikea furniture store passed unanimously in a City Council subcommittee hearing on Tuesday — despite a large turnout of project opponents — the plan appeared to be a shoe-in success for the Sweden-based multinational corporation. Indeed, the next day, the council's Land Use committee followed suit, unanimously approving the plan, with one abstention.

But that abstention, by East New York Councilman Charles Barron, shed light on potential sticking points that may be brought up again when the full council votes on the plan this Wednesday. [A report on Barron's position appears on page 6.]

Zoning chairman, Queens Councilman Tony Avella, declared "this was not a good project, this is a great project," at the subcommittee's earlier hearing, and Land Use chairwoman Melinda Katz, also of Queens, touted having spent more time in Red Hook in the past year than in any other community.

But Barron withheld his vote saying he wanted more information about Ikea's commitments to the community, the ability of workers to unionize and company efforts to mitigate the inevitable influx of traffic and consequent potential environmental hazards to the area.

"I do have an un-readiness," he told fellow committee members after two glowing "aye" votes from the council members in line before his vote.

Barron suggested, without mincing

words, that corporations can manipulate discussion away from what to some are the lesser concerns of environmental impact and traffic problems by making the grand promise of jobs.

"I want us to proceed with caution and be vigilant with the proceedings that come forward at this time," he said, but took care to commend the hard work of Red Hook Councilwoman Sara Gonzalez, who's support of the Ikea plan helped move the project through the committees.

Katz, however, said she was content with the environmental pledges Ikea had made to use a solar-paneled roof for recycling water and to do an irradiation and toxin removal of the soil on which it will be building the 6.3-acre shopping center and waterfront expanse.

See CITY COUNCIL on page 6

BCAT Programming Guide

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Cops catch half of Smith Street purse-snatch duo

By Jess Wisloski
The Brooklyn Papers

Police have arrested a teenager they believe was part of a nefarious team that committed a rash of purse snatchings and wallet thefts

in bars and restaurants along Smith Street over the past few months.

Just half an hour after police officers from the 76th Precinct and the city's Crime Prevention Unit—who were sent out to inform Smith

Street patrons about protecting their personal property—had left the block, another in a long chain of purse thefts was prevented by an alert bar patron.

"Crime Prevention sent out two sergeants and 36 officers," on the night of Sept. 24, the 76th Precinct's commanding officer, Deputy Inspector Joseph Cassidy, explained at a precinct community council meeting Tuesday night. "We basically went to every store, hit 81 locations, and spoke to 5,000 people. They left at 11 pm."

"At 11:30 pm, we finally figured out how this was being done," Cassidy said, hinting for the first time that it wasn't just a slew of incidental crimes in which various miscreants took advantage of the negligence of bar revelers or diners.

The summer-long rash of purse and wallet snatchings, which took place along the same strip of bars and restaurants on Smith Street, may have been perpetrated by the same two guys.

"We had an incident. We had a guy that was walking out of a bar with a women's purse under his arm. And he

was questioned," said Cassidy.

In that incident, an alert pedestrian who lives in the neighborhood—and who had minutes before been handed one of Crime Prevention's tip sheets on personal theft—saw a man with a purse tucked under his arm coming out of a bar on Smith Street near Baltic Street.

The passerby stopped and asked the man if the purse was his, and when the man didn't respond, he alerted Smith's head in the bar asking if any body was missing a purse. Sure enough, one man said his wife just noticed her purse missing. Meanwhile, the thief had already taken off southbound on Smith.

The witnesses chased the suspect, and the 17-year-old was apprehended and arrested that night at the intersection of Smith and Third streets.

"We asked the guy how it worked, and he said he walked in and knocked the purse over off a chair. His friend would come in a couple of minutes later, make as if he was tying his shoe or something, and pick it up," said Cassidy.

The alleged accomplice had not yet been arrested at press time.

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Gunman mugs teen on Lincoln Pl.

By Jess Wisloski
The Brooklyn Papers

A 16-year-old Park Slope teen was headed home from a friend's house at 5:15 pm when he was robbed at gunpoint on Sept. 25.

The boy told police he was walking eastbound on Lincoln Place near the corner of Eighth Avenue, when a man who had been walking westbound approached him.

Whipping a gun out, the man held it at the boy's head and said, "Give me your money," in a thick accent that the victim told police sounded Russian.

The teenager complied, handing over a \$20 bill.

The mugger fled westbound on Lincoln Place, and the boy ran to his home on Prospect Park West and called the police.

The mugger was described as over 6 feet tall, about 230 pounds, with long, straight black hair and with a piercing

78 PCT. BLOTTER

in his left ear. The day of the crime he wore a black shirt and white vest or sweater.

BMX mugger

A 22-year-old Park Slope woman was going from her job to visit a friend when she was mugged on Lincoln Place between Sixth and Seventh avenues on Sept. 30.

At 12:15 am, a young man rode up to her on a silver BMX bike, and, tossing the bike aside, grabbed her jacket and flashed a silver knife at her.

"I'll poke you," he threatened. Fearing for her life, the woman handed over \$20 and a cell phone.

He took off on his bike toward Prospect Park West.

Nab 'mugger'

A teenager robbed a woman of her cell phone on

Lincoln Place at the corner of Fifth Avenue on Sept. 29.

The woman, 34, was walking home at 10:52 pm, when a bandit, later described as a 14-year-old boy, of Prospect Heights, used force to take her cell phone out of her hand, police said.

Police Officer Daniel Ortiz of the 84th Precinct responded to the scene, and apprehended the suspect, who was identified by a victim less than an hour later and charged with robbery and criminal possession of stolen property, according to police.

Car returned

An investigation into a car theft in Park Slope that was reported on Sept. 28 resulted in the quick arrest of three suspected culprits who were caught red-handed with the stolen vehicle and couldn't get their stories straight.

When a 53-year-old woman discovered her 2002 Chrysler minivan missing from where she'd parked it on Sept. 26 at 2 pm — on 13th Street between Sixth and Seventh avenues — she called police. Two days after last seeing it, it seemed unlikely the car would be recovered, but the call went out, and sure enough the vehicle turned up at a Bushwick residence.

The three resisted arrest by responding Police Officer Karl Rugg, and argued while being questioned as to who was really to blame.

The men, in their early 20s, were arrested on Sept. 29. They all started blaming one another and were referred to the Red Hook Community Justice Center. The vehicle was returned to its rightful owner.

11th St. burglary

A 40-year-old Park Slope resident came home at 11 pm on Sept. 29 to find his apartment on 11th Street near Sixth Avenue had been broken into

by a man he'd seen when he left his apartment at 9:30 am.

The point of entry was found to be the rear window, and the victim said he had noticed a stranger to the building

knocking on apartment doors, and making his way towards the victim's apartment.

A DVD player and Playstation were missing, totaling \$375 in stolen property, he told police.

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Off-duty cop runs naked in Sun'Park

By Jess Wisloski
The Brooklyn Papers

An off-duty city police detective was found running down a Sunset park street nearly naked at 6 am on Oct. 5.

The cop was picked up by police officers of the 72nd Precinct. Holding a sex toy in one hand, which he said wasn't his, he told them a tale of abduction and gang rape.

Newspaper reports Wednesday shared the same sad tale of a man in his underwear coping with a possible mental breakdown.

With investigations pending, the police department refused to release any information confirming or refuting the report.

According to the published reports, police responded to a call, and found the off-duty cop in a panic, claiming to have been robbed and abducted in Williamsburg by six men who forced him into his own car and sexually assaulted him before fleeing. But after a preliminary investigation, police sources said the story held no water, and the detective rescinded his original claims.

Reports said the man was running up 19th Street near the intersection of Third Avenue shouting for somebody to telephone the police and get help.

One neighbor reported looking outside his window and seeing the man in front of his house with no clothes on, except for socks and a T-shirt.

When no help arrived, the half-nude man walked toward Fourth Avenue and 18th Street where he demanded a deli owner let him use the telephone so he could call his fiancée. The man passed him the phone through his gated storefront, and after a 10-minute conversation, the cop returned the phone.

About half an hour later, the officer returned, and asked again to use the phone. This time, the storeowner gave him 75 cents and told him to find a pay phone. He watched as the off-duty cop made a call and was picked up by a squad car shortly thereafter.

The detective was placed

on modified duty with neither gun nor badge, while the investigation is under way.

Though the police department would not release any information about the detective, a source said he had been working in the department for at least 10 years.

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84/76 BLOTTER

Food delivery snatch in B'Hill

By Jess Wisloski
The Brooklyn Papers

A 36-year-old food deliveryman was making a run on his bicycle when he was beaten up and mugged in Boerum Hill at 9:40 pm on Oct. 1. He was lured by a false delivery call, say police.

The deliveryman was sent to an address on Bergen Street between Hoyt and Bond streets. As he approached the apartment, two men ran up to him and knocked him off the bike. They punched him about the head and took a Motorola cell phone from his back pocket before fleeing on Bond Street.

The crime was witnessed by a neighbor, and recounted to police. When the restaurant called the phone number they were given for the address, the man who picked up said he had not ordered any food.

Grab bag

A woman's purse was stolen at 4:10 pm on Oct. 2 at the corner of Livingston and Hoyt streets.

The 58-year-old victim told police she was walking home when a man approached her and grabbed her handbag from

her left side and took off in the opposite direction of the busy street. She turned to look for him, but he had disappeared into the throng of passersby.

Jay station mug

A 68-year-old Bath Beach woman was mugged in the A-F subway station at Willoughby and Jay streets on Sept. 29 at 10:30 pm.

Through an interpreter, the Russian woman told police a day later that she was exiting the train in a packed group of people when she said she felt her purse being pulled off her shoulder. She caught a glimpse of a man running up the stairs, but said she did not see his face.

Unable to seek help due to the language barrier, she called police the next day, and reported stolen her black purse, with her U.S. passport, house keys and an appointment book.

Bridge scrape

A woman walking on the Brooklyn Bridge walkway was accosted by a bicyclist who failed in an attempt to steal her necklace, and then ended up with scraped knees.

On Sept. 27, at 12:45 pm, the woman, 46, was headed towards the Cadman Plaza exit from the footpath when the bicyclist tried to make a swipe and fell off his bike instead. When he got up, she told police, he looked stunned, got back on his bike and continued on.

Inside job?

A health care office on Montague Street between Court and Clinton streets was robbed of \$2,000.

On Sept. 24 at 11 pm, an executive opened the safe, hidden in a wardrobe inside her office, checked its contents and left it open as usual throughout the day.

When she went to lock it at 5:05 pm, she discovered it had been looted.

Stroller picked

At the corner of Montague and Court streets on Sept. 21, a 33-year-old woman discovered her wallet missing from the baby stroller she had been pushing around on her daily errands.

At 2:30 pm, the Brooklyn Heights woman discovered that the wallet in her baby's stroller, which had been in a pocket, was gone. Among the items in the wallet, she told police, were her driver's license and various credit cards.

LEGAL NOTICES

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, County of Kings on the 15th day of September, 2004, bearing Index Number: 034462004, a writ of which may be returned at the Office of the Clerk, located at 141 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201, in case number 002 grants the minor, JORDAN TILES JAMES the right effective upon compliance with the provisions of this notice to assume the name of JORDAN TILES JAMES. His date of birth is August 27, 1997. The place of birth is Manhattan, New York. His present address is 59 Galtson Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11229. ggg3

State University of New York at Binghamton The State University of New York at Binghamton Medical Center and General Hospital Project No. 03-165 Titled: Clinical Lab Investigation and Blood Chemistry Hospital and 2:00 p.m. Local Time on Oct. 28, 2004 at 450 Galtson Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11229, B'n 1-15, where such proposals will be publicly opened and read and the bids are to be received and sealed within 10 calendar days starting on 10:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time on the date of the New York State Comptroller. Bidding and contract documents may be obtained from the State University of New York at Binghamton, 450 Galtson Avenue, Box 13, Brooklyn, NY 11203 or NIA, the Comptroller. Section 145 of the State Finance Law requires payment of a deposit to receive these documents. Accordingly, a deposit of \$40.00, made payable to SUNY Binghamton Medical Center is required. Deposits less than \$50.00 are non-refundable. Bids must be submitted in duplicate in accordance with the instructions contained in the information for bidders. Security will be required for each bid in an amount not less than five (5) percent of the Total Bid. It is the policy of the State of New York and the State University of New York to encourage minority business enterprise participation in this project by contractors, subcontractors and suppliers, and all bidders are expected to cooperate in implementing the goals. Contractors and subcontractors must meet JCADO Accreditation requirements. The State University of New York reserves the right to reject any or all bids. ggg3

Notice is hereby given that a license, number 115048 for restaurant use and later has been applied for by the undersigned FORTINO to sell wine and beer at retail in a restaurant under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 187 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, New York for on-premises consumption.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, COUNTY OF Horry, IN THE HONORABLE COURT OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT CASE NO. 04-04-SOUTH CAROLINA JANE JOHNSON Plaintiff, v. Charles Alexander Stinson, a minor under the age of fourteen (14) years, and JOSEPH STOCKTON, Defendants. SUMMONS FOR RELIEF TO THE DEFENDANT JOSEPH STOCKTON: YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the Complaint in this action, a copy of which is herewith served upon you, and to serve a copy of your answer to the said Complaint on the undersigned at their offices at 193 Third Avenue, 20th Floor, 24th Century, South Carolina, 29504-1244, within thirty (30) days after the service hereof, and if you fail to answer the Complaint within the time aforesaid, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint. Joseph D. Burroughs, 2nd Attorney for Plaintiff, Joseph D. Burroughs & Henry P.A., Post Office Drawer 1244, 193 Third Avenue, 20th Floor, 24th Century, 29504-1244, fax (843) 248-4229, facsimile (843) 248-7182, jbb@burroughsllc.com, dated: March 25, 2004. Burroughs, South Carolina. (BFB)

Notice of formation of limited liability company (LLC) Name: EARLY REEF CAPITAL GROUP, L.L.C. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York 10/01/04 on February 10, 2004. Office location: Kings County, NY. Designated as agent of LLC, whose powers and duties may be varied. SONY shall mail copy of process to Thomas J. Costello, 59 Pineapple St., Apt. 51, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Management of the limited liability company shall be by one or more members. Purpose: To engage in lawful act or activity. ggg3-42

Notice is hereby given that a license #150849 for restaurant use has been applied for by the VRLA 2004 Corp. to sell beer and wine at retail in a restaurant under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 209 Brighton Beach Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11225 for on-premises consumption. VRLA 2004 Corp. ggg3-49

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Nancy Gallo, formerly of Boro Photo (Montague St.) has opened her own studio in Brooklyn Heights. Studio hours are available by appointment only. The quality studio portraits Nancy has shot in the past are now available again at very reasonable rates!



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Getting it right...

The man pictured between Borough President Marty Markowitz and developer Bruce Ratner on page 1 of last week's Brooklyn Papers was misidentified as former New York Knick great Bernard King. The man pictured was in fact NBA Hall of Famer Connie Hawkins. We regret the error.

An editor's note following a letter by Ikea Red Hook real estate director Patrick Smith contained the wrong name for Ikea's lawyer. The reference was supposed to name Ikea lawyer Jesse Masyr — not Ikea spokesman Jamie Van Bramer — as

the man who told The Brooklyn Papers that no law prevented the company from guaranteeing jobs to residents of a particular ZIP code.

We regret the error.

In the article headlined "Should I stay or Should I go? Smith St. bar owner asks nabe to decide," resident Diane Buxbaum was referred to as an enforcement agent for the CPA. It should have read EPA.

We regret the error.

The Brooklyn Papers strives for accuracy, but sometimes mistakes are made. In such cases, readers are urged to contact Managing Editor Neil Sloane at (718) 834-9350, ext. 119, or by fax at (718) 834-9278.

4 AWP

THE BROOKLYN PAPERS • WWW.BROOKLYNPAPERS.COM

October 9, 2004

Call Gowanus X-way fix-up a diversion

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

Proponents of replacing the elevated Gowanus Expressway with a tunnel charged this week that a project slated for next year to reconstruct a large swath of the crumbling roadway is nothing more than a cunning ruse designed to delay

further study of a tunnel alternative.

Members of the Gowanus Community Stakeholders Group contend that the decision by state Department of Transportation officials to proceed with a \$400 million re-decking project will delay completion of an environmental impact statement the agency is required to prepare. The project, which would replace four miles of the expressway deck in as many phases, is expected to begin in the spring of 2005.

"This construction could completely eclipse the tunnel project," said Michael Cairl, chairman of the stakeholders group, which formed following a lawsuit against the Transportation Department and the Federal Highway Administration, both of which initially refused to look at alternatives.

"By deciding to re-deck the entire Gowanus Viaduct, the state has effectively said 'no' to a tunnel, and apparently is hoping Brooklyn residents will not notice construction going on over their heads for at least eight years."

Earlier this year, Cairl and other stakeholders carpooled an effort to hold public meetings in each of the neighborhoods that would be affected by a tunnel project. While meeting on a monthly basis with state officials, the group whittled a list of half a dozen options down to four. Most popular, however, is a tunnel just west of First Avenue that is longer than the other four- and five-mile routes but less expensive.

Harold Fink, a Gowanus project supervisor for the Department of Transportation, said that over the next six years, workers will replace the deteriorating deck, which often falls in pieces through the expressway causing small holes to form. This year alone, said Fink, 25 holes have opened up.

"This is an interim solution to a very serious problem on the deck," said Fink. "We've been patching it for the last 15 years and we've reached a point where we can no longer just patch it."

Fink said that with each hole, construction crews stop traffic, sometimes two lanes at a time. With each new "punch-through" case, as the phenomenon is referred to by the Transportation Department, the traffic gets stalled even more.

"We can't live like that forever," said Fink.

The first phase of the project, said Fink, is expected to begin in spring 2005 between 24th and 52nd streets in the left lanes of the expressway; the second phase, to start in 2006 and end in 2008, would target the inbound connector ramp of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway; the third, which would focus on the Prospect Expressway interchange, would begin in 2008 and end in 2011; and the fourth phase would begin in 2009 along the Shore Parkway interchange and end in 2011.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, who has in the past earmarked funding for further study of tunnel alternatives, said through a spokesman that he also was concerned about the renovation project.

"The congressman shares the community's concerns and shares the concerns of the Gowanus coalition about the work being done," said Robert Gotheim, director of Nadler's Brooklyn office.

"While the state Department of Transportation says it's necessary, we know that the roadway is in a severe state of disrepair. Any of what's being done should not preclude the EIS."

"The process needs to continue and the current work being done should not have a negative impact on what's being found in the study."

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MUNICIPAL PARKING GARAGE AROUND THE CORNER ON SCHERMERHORN STREET

Car-free Prospect Park vexes some neighbors

By Jess Wisloski
The Brooklyn Papers

With drivers and residents near Prospect Park already complaining that traffic on their streets is backed up due to a 10-month-old cut in the hours cars are allowed in the park, a bicycle-advocacy group is calling for trying out a complete ban on cars.

Backed by several elected officials, the group Transportation Alternatives may get the standard November through January car-free hours extended even further — the next step in their goal of ultimately having a completely car-free park. And while bikers, rollerbladers, runners and walkers won't have to navigate around traffic, the neighbors down the block might not share their enthusiasm.

"I had to get on the line to get into Windsor Place," said Pat Malia, a Windsor Terrace resident and car-dependent traveling sales representative. "The traffic is so bad, and people are just ignoring the lights."

A longtime resident of the area, Malia said she's never

seen traffic jams occurring on a daily basis before, and is frustrated that the hours during which cars are allowed in the park continue to be reduced, despite traffic congestion caused by construction on the Gowanus Expressway and the recent addition of turning lanes.

The Department of Transportation is calling for trying out a complete ban on cars.

Transportation Alternatives, a group that advocates non-polluting forms of transit, managed to rally enough support to have the DOT limit park hours — which had been from 7 am to 10 am and 3 pm to 7 pm — down to 7 am to 9 am and 5 pm to 7 pm.

Now they want to take it a step further.

"Holiday hours," which run November through January, would have rolled the drive-time hours in the park back to the pre-2004 seven hours-a-day schedule, but the group has been supported in their efforts to maintain the current schedule of only four hours per day for those three months by Assemblyman James Brennan and Councilman Bill De-

Blasio and David Yassky, who separately wrote letters to DOT Commissioner Irvin Weinsshall appealing for the cuts.

"We wanted to end the holiday hours in the park," said DeBlasio's chief of staff Peter Hatch, who indicated that the councilman's interest was largely attributable to the lobbying efforts of Transportation Alternatives.

Not surprisingly, the group isn't advocating for the reduced hours alone — they want three months for a "trial closing" of the park altogether.

Kit Hodge, campaign coordinator for Transportation Alternatives, said based on the hundreds of postcards they sent to the DOT advocating the closing of the park to cars, and results from both a 1993 Central Park study of traffic patterns and one of Prospect Park in 1997, she thinks the area could handle a closing with minimal adverse effects.

"We've gotten support for either a fully car-free park or a trial closing of the park," she said, noting the organization had "numerous" civic and environmental groups as well as

the support of elected officials on their side.

"We occasionally hear from people who are against it, but the vast majority are vehemently for a car-free park," Hodge said.

A DOT spokesman confirmed that the agency had relied heavily on a 1997 study to initially cut the park's hours down from 24 hours a day in 1998 to the seven-hour days used up until last year, and had also referred to the same study in determining that the hours could be reduced even further, and only require that two of 30 traffic lights studied be altered to mitigate resulting traffic congestion.

Hodge said the study failed to account for "elasticity," and unlike the Central Park study, which showed that 15 percent of the drivers would find alternative methods and therefore disappear from the study area, was inaccurate.

"If they had taken this into the study they would've found that full closure is feasible," she said, and expressed her hope that a three-month trial closing would lead to a year-round closing.

Others, noting faults in the 1997 study, disagreed with Hodge's analysis.

Alvin Burk, the chairman of Community Board 14, which includes the Prospect Park South section of Flatbush, said he could see only gridlock coming from further cutting the park's car hours.

"All the other routes are saturated," he said, mentioning that the reduced hours, "signed off a great deal of the surrounding flow to the neighborhoods," and forced the pre-5 pm rush onto perimeter streets.

"There's a real environmental issue here. There's an air pollution issue if you have a street that needs to accommodate an extra 500 to 1,000 cars per hour, and that exhaust is coming into your windows," said Burk.

"It is a greater liability to the public health than is the liability of cars," he said. See **CAR-FREE** on page 18

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By Randi Weingarten

Imagine NASA excluding its rocket scientists when planning a mission to Mars, or a hospital not consulting doctors when drawing up plans to build a new intensive care facility. It's a good bet that problems will arise down the road.

The same holds true for education. The most successful administrators are those wise enough to listen and respond to the concerns and suggestions of educators who work with kids daily and know their needs.

Judging by recent events, this is a lesson that the Department of Education sometimes takes to heart, but on other occasions manages to ignore.

A positive example: last year when the mayor announced plans to target third-graders in his attempt to end social promotion — the policy of advancing students to the next grade even if they have not mastered key academic knowledge and skills — he did so without first consulting front-line educators.

That resulted in a firestorm of criticism as concerned parents and education experts questioned the fairness and effectiveness of the policy. Over time, the plan was changed, including adding resources for struggling students, the creation of an appeals process, and the

Working together for Kids

establishment of protocols to guide educators making these critical decisions about kids' lives.

One might have expected a similar negative reaction when, at the beginning of this school year, the mayor announced that he would expand the no social promotion policy to fifth-graders. But this time the public reaction was muted — and generally supportive — because the administration had learned a lesson. It listened to educators and made sure that the plan, which was announced at the start of the school year, included immediate additional supports and resources to improve students' prospects for success, and was not based solely on one standardized test.

Now for the negative example: Starting this summer, parent groups and teachers began hearing from principals that — despite additional money from the state this year — many of our schools were receiving large cuts in their budgets.

The Department of Education at first professed that there were no cuts, then said it was a question of a fairer allocation among schools, then said it was waiting for more state funds.

Now after adding more than \$100 million at various intervals, the Department has said that schools will be getting at least as much money as they got last year. But with the new

budgeting process, few of us can figure out where the money is going.

Some of our largest high schools are even more overcrowded than last year, with thousands of classes that exceed our contract's class-size limits including high school science classes with 45 students and physical education classes with 60 students or more. Tutoring, SAT prep and remediation classes have been cut, high school electives have been put on hold, and advanced placement and after-school programs have been canceled. Tweed may be spending the money on good programs, but at what cost to these important needs?

Tweed's lack of candor has fostered an atmosphere of mistrust and a sense in both teachers and parents that their issues and their kids are a lower priority than meeting some budget goal, or policy objective such as small schools or new coaches/parent coordinators, even when the city rolled over a budget surplus of nearly \$2 billion.

Enlightened employers everywhere have learned — the hard way, in some cases — that even in industries using unskilled workers, involving employees in decision-making boosts morale and productivity. If the Department of Education wants to succeed, this is a lesson Tweed needs to keep relearning.

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Barron blasts 'uninformed' Ikea approval

By Jess Wisloski

The Brooklyn Papers

Councilman Charles Barron abstained from casting a vote at a Land Use committee hearing at City Hall on Wednesday based on his apprehensions about a commitment to the community by Ikea, the Swedish furniture company that has plans to develop a big-box store on the Red Hook waterfront.

While speaking to a colleague about his decision to withhold his vote, the East New York legislator said he didn't feel as if the council members were well-enough informed to vote on the massive project.

"The reason I know anything about this project is because I keep on top of these things, we read The Brooklyn Papers, and I've been following the concerns and questions raised by the community," Barron said, standing in the back of the council chambers following his committee's otherwise unanimous vote to approve the Ikea proposal.

Asked about his non-vote, Bar-

'The reason I know anything about this project is because I keep on top of these things, we read The Brooklyn Papers, and I've been following the concerns and questions raised by the community' —East New York Councilman Charles Barron

ron said that Ikea's attempts to win the community over by donating money to a few community programs was not sufficient for "one of the richest men in the world," Ikea owner Ingvar Kamprad, whose estimated net worth is \$18.5 billion.

"Why doesn't he commit Ikea to profit sharing?" he asked rhetorically. "You want to empower them, how about putting one or two percent of the profit towards developing other parts of the community, ensuring small businesses can stay there as well."

At the vote, Barron stated his concern that Ikea store employees are not unionized, and that the hazy promise of jobs was dubious because it lacked any signed commitments.

"You can create jobs without violating the environment. You can create jobs so people can work towards something. We don't need a Rite Aid pharmacy, we need a right-on pharmacy, that you own. I'm all about that, ownership," he said.

He added that no sufficient discussion had been held on traffic impacts, and thought that all new developments in Brooklyn could start to set a precedent for community involvement.

"Downtown Brooklyn is going to be a mess environmentally on traffic, on how developers use eminent domain, on how developers give out jobs," he said, noting that he was afraid the desperation of populations like those in Red



Charles Barron

Hook's public housing, which comprises 75 percent of the Red Hook population, focus too much on immediate needs for survival, instead of grasping a larger picture of what could be accomplished.

"What happens is people personalize these projects," he said, "and when they get a little more than usual they are a little over enthusiastic. We need to make sure developers come into communities

and have relationships that are empowering, not exploitative."

Barron said he was afraid the kind of jobs offered would be unlikely to provide advancement or growth opportunities, which was an arguing point for opponent groups, none of which, he noted, approached him for help.

To illustrate his point about jobs, Barron brought up the Gateway Estates, a massive mall complex that was built in his district near Starrett City. Despite community agreements that each company that moved into the mall had signed pledging to hire locally, he said the jobs were of poor quality, did not offer advancement to managerial positions and led to high turnover.

"Is East New York better for it? No," he said. "Right now those little jobs they're offering — [the businesses are] getting it back from what you spend a thousand-fold."

Barron seemed convinced that profit sharing would be a surefire answer to community involvement. "That's a real commitment, to say, 'We'll come in and let you invest money. You want to raise the bar? Then raise it to there.'"

CITY COUNCIL PANEL BACKS IKEA PROJECT

Continued from page 1

Councilman Simcha Felder, who represents Borough Park and parts of Bensonhurst, also expressed concern about traffic problems, but voted in favor of the project just the same. "I think we should approve the project," he said, "but I think it's bizarre to approve a project in Downtown Brooklyn that we know will make the traffic worse. Especially when people are trying to close [Prospect Park] down to cars."

However, Wednesday's meeting was not the forum for contention or arguments against the development; in fact, no opponents showed up, and only Ikea spokesmen from Yonkers New York, the company representing Ikea, were present. On Tuesday, opponents were given plenty of time to present arguments to the subcommittee, although Avella said he thought several people squandered their two minutes at the podium.

Avella told The Brooklyn Papers in an interview after the meeting that he was displeased about some of the comments made on more personal levels about the project.

"A few members of, I guess the community who were opposed, got out of line. We're there to listen to their concerns and take that into account when we hear the project," Avella said, and explained that some people used their speaking time to issue accusatory remarks against Gonzalez and the City Council. "They do themselves no great service to their cause if, when they get up to do their two minutes, they spend that time attacking people."

He added that a great number of speakers were in favor of the project, and that after he had alternated the speakers, switching off statements by those for and then against the project, he had 44 people left over when all the stated opponents had spoken.

Leon Sones, a Red Hook resident and anti-Ikea community activist, said he was disappointed by the council members' failure to ask any pertinent questions after the developers' presentation.

"I was disturbed at how little questions this committee asked Ikea. They asked two questions — they didn't even want to hear about the impact," Sones said, which has long been the anti-Ikea groups' strongest argument. "They basically said, 'How close is the nearest house?'"

Sones readily admitted he had been one of the contentious speakers, having mentioned his suspicions of a "political fix" on the plans. "Tony Avella was very upset," he said. "His feathers seemed ruffled." But Sones also condemned one person's testimony, who just pointed a finger at Gonzalez and said, "You failed us."

"That was way out of line," said Sones, who added that he only got "close to crossing the line," by saying the fix was in.

Gonzalez, however, wasn't hurt by the outburst. "I didn't see it like that at all; they are my community, they are my constituents," she said following Wednesday's hearing. "Their argument has substantially shown that people are thinking and are involved in the community," she said, and vowed she would remain vigilant throughout the development proceedings.

Meanwhile, in city chambers adjacent to where the vote was held, Jon Yosewicz, head of the Ikea-led PR firm, fervently argued the company's case of community empowerment to Barron, who tried to offer her a different perspective.

"[Developer Bruce] Ratner has raised the bar in terms of his community benefits agreement. He's promising much more than you are," Barron said, noting the community benefits agreements, that could guarantee local jobs, that are close to being signed regarding Ratner's proposal to build a basketball arena, housing and office towers at the edge of Downtown Brooklyn. Barron asked Yosewicz if he was familiar with Ratner's Atlantic Yards project.

"Councilmember," Yosewicz replied, "I look at what Ratner's done, and it horrifies me," she said.

"Well, yes, he's made some promises he hasn't kept," agreed Barron, but pointed out that with Ikea's wealth, they could offer more to the community than the amended street plans and free ferries and shuttles it currently has proposed.

"The bar may be higher than some other benefits, but it is still very low," he said.

Although the vote closed on Tuesday with the subcommittee voting five votes in favor of Ikea, with two absentees, both of those members voting in favor of the project Wednesday morning prior to the full council hearing. That vote, too, stunned Sones, who said four out of five community board members who lived in Red Hook were against it at its earliest stages in the land review process before Community Board 6.

Though Barron's withheld vote may mean nothing in the long run — the plan passed 17-0 — Sones said even the recognition of at least one council member was a gift.

"That's a little help, from my point of view," he said. "God bless him for having some guts for breaking out from the fold."

Markowitz testily defends himself at Park Slope Food Co-op meeting

By Jess Wisloski

The Brooklyn Papers

Borough President Marty Markowitz subjected himself to questioning at the Park Slope Food Co-op last Saturday, much of it dealing with developer Bruce Ratner's plan to build a basketball arena, apartment buildings and office towers in Prospect Heights.

Markowitz said he came to the meeting expecting to be confronted by opponents of the arena plan and to many of the 30 or so people who attended he appeared confrontational.

"Obviously I'm not stupid. I knew the turnout would be those who I know are opposed to the arena," the borough president said in his opening remarks in the upstairs conference room in the co-op's 782 Union St. brick warehouse.

Markowitz blustered through explanations that many said were odd answers to new questions.

"I also have a right not to answer questions," he said. "That's my perfect right as a resident and a citizen."

Along with the disclaimer, Markowitz said he was concerned about the efforts of some people to "personalize this effort around me. I'm a big boy, I understand," he said, adding, "Whenever I do anything I really believe in, it's for the good of Brooklyn."

He also made a point of noting that the contentious Atlantic Yards arena, housing and commercial-office development plan was still in its early stages.

"As of yet, the developer has presented a wish list. Given the stars and the moon and the sun all line up together, the actual footprint will be determined later," Markowitz said of the massive development plan, which would emanate from the intersection of Atlantic and Flatbush avenues.

Then he called upon raised hands.

Tom Gogan, of Prospect Heights, said he had a hard time understanding the scope of the project, and asked about publicly subsidized tax abatements offered to Ratner's com-

NOT JUST NETS More development coverage on page 16

punity, Forest City Ratner.

"If we don't know what the public cost is going to be, how is it responsible for a public official to be such a cheerleader?" Gogan asked, referring to Markowitz' early and continuous support of the plan.

Gogan added that so far there are no commitments or signed agreements for what Ratner will bring to the community in exchange for having the state condemn so much property in the neighborhood.

"There will be," responded Markowitz, who brushed off the first part of the question by downplaying his role in the negotiations.

When questioned about the U.S. Supreme Court agreeing to hear an eminent domain case in New London, Conn., which may determine whether or not a government can seize private property to resell for higher tax-producing private development, Markowitz did not pull any punches.

"The Supreme Court's decision will make or break it," he said, referring to the arena plan.

Diane George, who said she lived in Prospect Heights for 12 years before rising rents forced her

able housing. But when George asked him if he would withdraw his support if that commitment was not honored, Markowitz said calmly, "I would be one very unhappy person."

When Markowitz called on George again, she asked why the development was a state-level process, and how it could "skirt" city review.

"It was understood by everyone on my staff, and folks who specialized in city planning say it's a state process," he told her.

A question from the back of the room asked if Markowitz would hence favor a change in public policy.

The borough president contended that he has met with advisors about seeking change in the state legislature, and named state Sen. Carl Andrews, who replaced him in the Legislature, as a person he had consulted.

Marty Markowitz at the Park Slope Food Co-op meeting.

to move to Sunset Park, asked about the availability of middle- and low-income housing in the Atlantic Yards plan, and Markowitz responded with gusto that Ratner's offer to set aside 50 percent of the 4,500 units of housing as "affordable" was a major reason for his support of the plan.

The borough president said he did not support the plan if it did not include the promise of afford-

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"As a public official you don't come into a meeting with a defensive attitude," said George.

He was very attacking. He tells people not to make it personal, but he's clearly emotional about it and takes it personally himself. That makes it personal for other people."

Susan Metz, a teacher running as a write-in candidate for Assembly against depressed Democrat Roger Green, said she was worried about what Markowitz's definitions of affordable housing were.

"Affordable is a meaningless term," said Metz.

"They said themselves that affordable is \$60,000 [income] a year."

"That's like \$1,800 a month," which she said most people could not afford.

Gloria Brandman, a Prospect Heights resident and co-op volunteer said she was disappointed that Markowitz seemed to ignore genuine concerns from the community.

"He appears to be blindly supporting [the arena plan] and a rational person would have to wonder what it is he stands to gain," Brandman said.

"He wants to paint a picture that he supports everyone in effect."

Gogan said he felt unsatisfied with the responses from the borough president's response to her question on state-level authority was circuitous. But what begged her most, she said, was his demeanor.

Anti-arena restaurant week

The Brooklyn Papers

Calling it "The Brooklyn Dodge," the anti-Nets arena group Develop-Dont Destroy Brooklyn is hosting a restaurant week to raise money for the fight against developer Bruce Ratner's planned Atlantic Yards project.

From Sunday, Oct. 17, to Sunday, Oct. 24, participating restaurants will donate 5 percent of their take for the week to DDBD's legal and other costs in their fight to stop Ratner's plan to build a basketball arena, apartment buildings and office skyscrapers in Prospect Heights.

The participating restaurants include: Franny's, 295 Flatbush Ave. at Prospect Place in Prospect Heights; Tom's Diner, 782 Washington

Ave. at Sterling Place in Prospect Heights; Bob Law's Seafood Cafe, 637 Vanderbilt Ave. at St. Mark's Place in Prospect Heights; Silver Spoon, 216 Flatbush Ave. at Myrtle Avenue in Fort Greene.

Maggie Brown, 455 Myrtle Ave. at Washington Avenue in Clinton Hill; Thai 101, 455A Myrtle Ave. at Washington Avenue in Clinton Hill; Louie Wine Bar, 74 Fifth Ave. at Prospect Place in Park Slope; Blue Sky Bakery, 53 Fifth Ave. at Bergen Street in Park Slope.

Curry Source, 88 Bergen St. at Smith Street in Boerum Hill; Bacchus, 409 Atlantic Ave. at Bond Street in Boerum Hill; Sonny's Bar & Grill, 305 Smith St. at Union Street in Carroll Gardens; Quincy, 242 Court St. at Balic Street in Cobble Hill.

A Table, 171 Adelphi Street at Lafayette Avenue in Fort Greene; Butta' Cup Lounge, 271 Adelphi St. at DeKalb Avenue in Fort Greene; Chez Oscar, 211 DeKalb Ave. at Adelphi Street in Fort Greene; Keir N' Dye, 737 Fulton St. at South Elliot Place in Fort Greene; Night of the Cookers, 767 Fulton St. at South Oxford Street in Fort Greene; Pequena, 86 S. Portland Ave. at 12th Avenue in Fort Greene; Pillow Cafe, 372 Myrtle Ave. at Adelphi Street in Fort Greene; Restaurant New Orleans, 747 Fulton St. at South Elliot Place in Fort Greene; Scoppio, 63 Lafayette Ave. at Fulton Street in Fort Greene.

The group expects more restaurants to be announced. A complete list can be viewed on their Web site at www.dbbd.net/restaurants.

Expert eyes Underground Railroad site

City-paid researcher to help determine if buildings on Tubman route should be exempted from Downtown Plan

By Jess Wisloski

The Brooklyn Papers

While tourists always come in a steady stream to New York City, most of them don't come looking for signs of the Underground Railroad.

Even fewer would climb over broken appliances and piles of boxes to peer through dank shafts in the basements of houses on Duffield Street in Downtown Brooklyn.

But that might change if the buildings at 223, 227, and 233 are determined to have been pieces of the slave escape route, as a few residents — seeking to exempt the properties from the development potential of the Downtown Brook-

lyn Plan — claim they are.

A Maryland researcher got her very own basement tour on Oct. 1, as part of her job in helping the city study the properties.

"Part of the problem is this is so underfunded that people wouldn't understand what was going on," said Cheryl LaRoche, the Underground Railroad expert who surveyed the properties last Saturday. She noted that the presence of not only abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher at the Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn Heights was a strong indicator of an antislavery movement in the area.

Though she wasn't ready to discuss any findings, LaRoche's investigation will help decide whether the buildings should be considered worthy of landmark status, saving them from condemnation and demolition.

The investigation by LaRoche and a team of specialists was mandated by the City Council's zoning subcommittee after the panel determined that the city Economic De-

velopment Corporation had not adequately investigated the matter.

In an attempt to rectify the problem, the Zoning chairman, Queens Councilman Tony Avella, said the EDC to hire independent historians to weigh in on the likelihood of the buildings' historic significance.

Avella's spokesman said the subcommittee would wait until the study was completed before determining whether the properties should be included in the Downtown Plan, which rezoned most of Downtown Brooklyn in order to allow the construction of office towers and other high-rises.

Councilwoman Letitia James, who assisted local residents in finding a qualified researcher, said she imagined the study would be comprehensive.

"That's what we were hoping, that's what we were pushing for. I'm waiting for this report to be issued and I'm waiting to get a determination on their analysis," she said. "Until I have an opportunity to

review the research in their study I will withhold judgement."

Joy Chate and Lewis Greenstein, who live in 227 and 233 Duffield, said they were excited to see the fight for their homes by showing up at hearings to testify about the bizarre features of their basements, including the discovery of a tunnel and underground space, which Greenstein believes to be a tunnel connecting several other residences on the street.

When LaRoche showed up at Chate's house, which has a ground-level beauty salon, a group of people, including Chate, LaRoche, Greenstein and several neighbors whose homes and businesses also face demolition under the Downtown Plan, descended into a dark basement with flashlights to inspect strange shafts in the back of the building, and a blocked-off entrance in the front.

Between showing herself into crawl spaces and peering into unexplainable door openings, LaRoche tried to cobble together an oral his-

tory of how Chate and Greenstein came to their conclusions that the Underground Railroad — through which escaped slave Harriet Tubman and others made their way to freedom in the north — ran through their basements.

"I knew a man, Calvin Smith, who lived in the basement of the corner His grandmother knew someone who owned the building at the turn of the century, and said it was a stop on the Underground Railroad," said Greenstein.

He said the comment stayed with him, but really piqued his interest later, when he found out about possible eviction.

Since then he's collected a 5,000-name list in a database on his laptop at home. "That's every black who lived in Brooklyn," he says proudly, which he's spent the better part of the past year collecting and categorizing by name, occupation, address, and years of occupancy. "It doesn't have everybody yet," he said.

See **UNDERGROUND** on page 16

Closed meetings mean fix is in

To the editor:

The article headlined "Behind Closed Doors: Bruce and Marty's private meetings" by Jess Wisloski [The Brooklyn Papers, Oct. 2] was insightful reporting missed by the major daily newspapers.

Former liberal reformer state Sen. Marty Markowitz has completed his metamorphosis into a Democratic Party clubhouse Brooklyn borough president in the tradition of his predecessors, such as former Brooklyn Borough Presidents Sebastian

Leone and Howard Golden.

Everyone knows when government officials conduct closed-door meetings it usually means that they have something to hide from the general public and media.

Opponents of both Bruce Ratner's Brooklyn Nets and Robert Wood Johnson's Jets West Side Manhattan stadiums have much in common.

You have to wonder how many New York City Council members have endorsed one or both projects and received campaign contributions from Nets owner Bruce Ratner or Jets owner Robert Wood Johnson IV and their friends. It will be interesting to read about future financial campaign reports prior to Borough President Markowitz's reelection effort in 2005 to see if there was a political quid pro quo.

Consider Queens Councilman David Weprin's clear conflict of interest in his support of the proposed Jets stadium. His July 16 public campaign finance report revealed that as Council Finance Committee chairman, Weprin has raised \$366,000 dollars to date. This included \$2,000 in donations from the Jets owner shortly after endorsing the project.

Independent observers of municipal government know that there is a political quid pro quo expected by lobbyists who represent various special interest groups doing business with the city in exchange for financial donations.

How can any public official represent the interests of taxpayers when accepting campaign contributions from those doing business with the city, by either seeking contracts or direct subsidies for construction projects such as the new Nets or Jets stadiums?

The appearance of a conflict of interest is obvious. Where there is smoke, there is fire.

Construction of the new Nets Brooklyn facility will cost taxpayers several hundred million dollars.

How many public officials in Kings County have accepted campaign contributions from Nets owner Bruce Ratner, his family, employees, con-

See **LETTERS** on page 16



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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

October 9, 2004

DUMBO invasion

Three-day neighborhood art fest covers 30 blocks with music, dance, art & more

By Lisa Selin Davis
for The Brooklyn Papers

When Joy Glidden organized the first DUMBO Art Under the Bridge festival in 1996, she aimed to bring attention to the sorely neglected neighborhood and reposition it as a sort of New York City-style Left Bank. Eight years later, DUMBO rivals the art scene in SoHo and Chelsea, and the three-day festival, beginning Oct. 15, is one of the largest and most important cultural events anywhere.

"The first year it had a sort of guerrilla-ish excitement," says Glidden, founding director of the DUMBO Arts Center (DAC), which organizes the festival. "We had around 200 artists participating then."

Now the number has ballooned to more than 1,500, with art installations, open studios and musical and theatrical performances incorporated into the festival, which covers 30 blocks of DUMBO and neighboring Vinegar Hill. Local galleries, businesses and artists' organizations all join in.

Highlights of the weekend include the "Parade of Concepts," a street procession with Frank Didak's electric cars and the one-man audio parade of Jeff Karolski. Slide, film and video projections grace various streets and buildings, and short films and videos by New York City artists screen Saturday and Sunday afternoon and evening.

All of the arts, from dance to painting, are represented, and events take place throughout the hidden nooks and crannies of DUMBO, from the last few abandoned buildings to the newly revamped Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park. At the York Street F train subway stop, catch Lee Keong-Keun's vinyl installation, part of the "Korean Art Now" exhibition. At the Tobacco Warehouse in the park, Matching Recordings hosts bands including Nervous Cabaret, Burnside Project, Bronx Monx and Mink Lungs. And at White Wave Performance and Rehearsal Space, at 25 Jay St. at John Street, more than 80 dance companies will showcase their choreography.

Since the DUMBO waterfront parks have been revitalized, DAC welcomed a number of water-themed works to this year's festival, including Murat Musuluoglu's mosaic installation, "Welcome," using 20,000 tiny cups of colored water, and Ian Sandler and Ron Minter's "Ear to the Sky," a floating car that channels river sounds toward the shore.

Those who are more academically inclined might try the artists' talk with Martha Rosler and Carolee Schneeman, two veterans of the feminist art movement.

For DUMBO artists, the festival offers the chance for the public, as well as art world professionals, to peer into their private workspaces.

"Everybody who has a studio down here has the opportunity of having curators, collectors, dealers and critics come by," says Glidden. "It's a golden opportunity if you're underrepresented."

A painter herself, Glidden joined an early wave of artists relocating to DUMBO in 1990, although the success of the festival has put a dent in her own art-making; she estimates that 90 percent of her time goes toward administrative tasks. But that doesn't change her mission: to continue reviving DUMBO as an artists' haven.

FESTIVAL

The DUMBO Art Under the Bridge Festival runs Oct. 15-17. Some events are free, and others require admission. A \$25 General Weekend Pass buys entry to all events at Soundbox (37 Main St. between Front and Water streets) and unlimited weekend film festival attendance (45 Main St. between Front and Water streets, ninth floor). Tickets, schedules and maps are available at DAC, 30 Washington St. between Water and Plymouth streets in DUMBO. For more information, call (718) 694-0631 or visit www.dumboartscenter.org.



The Brooklyn Papers' Chris Gagliardi

"It was basically an abandoned, desolate area back then," she says. "The artists would run from their studios to the subway." The lack of city amenities like street cleaning and garbage pickup, coupled with the many abandoned factories, once made DUMBO a forbidding place, albeit one that Glidden loved.

"I felt like I was discovering the most incredible little well-kept secret in the world," she said. The festival was designed to foment dialogue among artists, who can tend toward isolation, and bring attention to their work.

"It really had community interests at

heart," says Glidden. "We wanted to take the power out of the few gallery hands and bring it back to the artists, to hold open studios so they could become free agents."

Now, the neighborhood might be almost too well known. Skyscraper wars are raging as groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses and the veteran DUMBO developers Two Trees Management attempt to raise buildings as high as 20-stories in the area. But Glidden says the potential development doesn't hinder the artists or the festival. In 1997, Two Trees' father-and-son development team of David and Joel Walentas donated space to DAC, and have continued to be one of the



Tall order: DUMBO Art Center founding director Joy Glidden (at left) presents the DUMBO Art Under the Bridge Festival, which kicks off on Oct. 15. This year's fest includes (above, top to bottom) performances by White Wave Dance; strolls through artists' studios; and "Bon Appetit!?", a bilingual satire by Theatre Ouf.

festival's biggest supporters. They offer aid in the form of sanitation, donated space and cleanup crews.

"This festival just would not happen without them," says Glidden. "Their support is massive."

Just like the neighborhood, the festival has changed. It's gotten bigger and better, and Glidden says what started as a guerrilla-style taking-of-the-streets has become a legitimate and unparalleled art world happening.

"I really think that the DUMBO Art Under the Bridge Festival is completely unique," she says. "There's nothing else like it."

TOUR



Bed-Stuy tour

"Building on our dream" is the theme of the 26th annual Bedford-Stuyvesant house tour, which showcases both meticulously restored brownstones and those turn-of-the-century architectural gems still in the renovation process. With new shops blooming on the main drag of Lewis Avenue, the neighborhood has been undergoing a renaissance, so the Brownstoners of Bedford-Stuyvesant (the non-profit group organizing the tour) want Brooklynites to see first-hand how homeowners can help turn a place around.

"The theme reflects the hope and dreams that we have for our neighborhood," says Brenda Fryson, president of Brownstoners. "We want to encourage people to stay and bring young families in."

The self-guided tour departs from the Brooklyn Academy High School, at 832 Marcy Ave. at Putnam Avenue, beginning at 11 am on Sept. 16, with 10 homes to visit. Houses close promptly at 4 pm.

Also inside the school, there will be a homebuyers' seminar at 9 am, as well as a bazaar of crafts and home decor goods, from 10 am to 4 pm. Proceeds from the tour help fund a number of neighborhood initiatives, including scholarships and adult literacy programs.

Tickets are \$20, available in advance or on the day of the tour at Brownstone Books, 409 Lewis Ave. between Decatur and MacDonough streets, (718) 953-7328; The Juice Joint Juice Jaffe, 1585 Fulton St. between Albany Avenue and Marcus Garvey Boulevard, (718) 778-0777; and Lewis Gallery, 525 Atlantic Ave. between Third and Fourth avenues, (718) 624-8372. For more information visit the Web site www.brownstone-books.com/events_housestour.html.

— Lisa Selin Davis

BOOKS



Skater boy

In 1994, Williamsburg photographer Vincent Cianni focused his lens on a tribe of inline skating teens in the then-gritty neighborhood. The nearly 10-year fascination with the Hispanic boys as they demonstrated their jaw-dropping tricks on ramps, rails and jumps deepened into friendships, and now his decade-long study has resulted in a new book, "We Skate Hardcore: Photographs from Brooklyn's Southside" (New York University Press, \$24.95), published on Sept. 30.

The collection of black-and-white and color photographs also has a DVD bound into its back cover that has footage of the skaters in action and a slide show of memorabilia — to young neighborhood men slain by AIDS, drugs and domestic violence — that surround the skaters.

In the book, Cianni quickly discourages any notion that he is a dispassionate

onlooker documenting his surroundings. He lives in the neighborhood and befriends the boys and invites them to write the captions to their photos — not only in the margins but also on the actual photographs. The captions are, perhaps unintentionally, even more revealing — their poor penmanship, spelling and grammar are evidence that in addition to having the strikes of poverty and crime-infested streets against them, the boys haven't even had the opportunity to get a good education to skate out of this urban wasteland.

But time is a silent character in the book, and since '94 there have been a lot more artists like Cianni moving into Williamsburg, followed by yuppies, high rents and chic boutiques and cafes. Cianni follows the now-young men out of the southside of Williamsburg to where they've been stationed as part of the U.S. Army or to a wedding in Ohio.

Cianni's collection of photographs is an arresting look at a group of boys who embraced a dangerous sport and in the process of building their skate parks and learning new tricks, formed a tight-knit community of friends who looked out for each other and helped one another survive.

— Lisa J. Curtis

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Empty canvases

Surreal Cafe must improve look of entrees on the plate

By Tina Barry
for The Brooklyn Papers

I f I were to name a cafe I wouldn't choose the word "surreal." The title conjures up unappealing images of dripping eggs and melting clocks. And, as it turns out, it is not a fitting name for the Surreal Cafe, a down-to-earth eatery that opened in August in Park Slope.

Owner Ron Katz, a 20-year Park Slope resident, wanted to open a cafe that served breakfast, lunch and dinner to the neighborhood. He finds

wooden tables, and a few small pieces of art (surreal, of course) that hang on the cream-colored walls.

Katz, who developed the fine kosher fare at Fischer Brothers & Leslie, a take-out and butcher shop on the Upper West Side, created the cafe's menu, a mix of American bistro style with Middle Eastern cuisine, with his first chef, Nir Feller, formerly of Diner in Williamsburg, and his present chef, Gabriel Thompson, formerly of Le Bernardin in Manhattan.

Usually when I read a menu, there are a few items that pop out as winners and the rest I skip with little regret. Not so with Surreal Cafe's cohesive, seasonal dishes. Deciding between the shrimp bisque or the prosciutto with fresh figs and ricotta was a dilemma. The "sabich" sandwich, made with layers of fried eggplant, potatoes, preserved lemon and tahini (a paste made from ground

sesame seeds) on homemade pita bread sounded fabulous, but so did fettuccini with olive-and-dried-chili tapenade.

Much of what I finally selected lived up to their descriptions. Warm, chewy, dense

and buttery, the house-made pita bread is in a class of its own. That big bowl of rose-colored, complexly layered, pepper-tinged shrimp bisque held my attention to the last spoonful.

And such enjoyable, beautifully executed food throws the kitchen's blunders into high relief.

My friend and I shared the meze plate entree, containing two salads and two spreads, as an appetizer. The baba ghanoush (eggplant spread) was chunky, smoky and garlicky, and it was delicious when scooped up with a triangle of that pita bread. Chickpeas were crisp and peppery, but wedges of earthy-tasting beets sprinkled with fennel seeds would have

benefited from a little olive oil or lemon to moisten them. More moisture was also needed for slightly underdone roasted carrots sprinkled with sumac. For this dish to satisfy diners, the kitchen has to do better than two out of four.

And, if you're going to include a dish on the menu that sounds as enticing as "meatballs with walnuts and cherries seasoned with 'ras al-hanout' [a Moroccan blend of cinnamon, cloves

and black pepper] with Yukon gold mashed potatoes and wild mushrooms" make sure what you serve matches the narrative. Four small hamburgers, even rare, grilled ones with a nutty flavor, aren't meatballs—they don't have the soft texture breadcrumbs add. The mushrooms were just OK, and the mushrooms were dry. Like the meze plate, this dish needed a splash of sauce to link its elements.

It's obvious that Thompson has learned a trick or two about cooking

fish at Le Bernardin. The skin of his perfect black sea bass entree, served over thick slices of oven-baked tomatoes, was crisp and its flesh moist and sweet.

Even a cafe with a humble, just-feeding-the-neighborhood vibe, must pay attention to plating. The generous servings, with no garnishes, are in keeping with the cafe's casual atmosphere, but they aren't special enough for a meal outside the home. A little less food on the smallish plates with a sprig of basil or swirl of sauce would satisfy clients aesthetically.

Both dessert specials were disappointing. The fruit used to top a fresh peach tart was hard and flavorless and the pastry cream left only the impression of flour. Most pear pound cake with pear chutney suggested a lovely welcome to fall, but the cake had little fruit flavor and the chutney screamed for warm, sweet spices like ginger or cinnamon.

Most of the food at the Surreal Cafe is so close to being just right that when it isn't, a meal can be disappointing. Once the kinks are worked out, the kitchen will deliver as much as the menu promises.

DINING

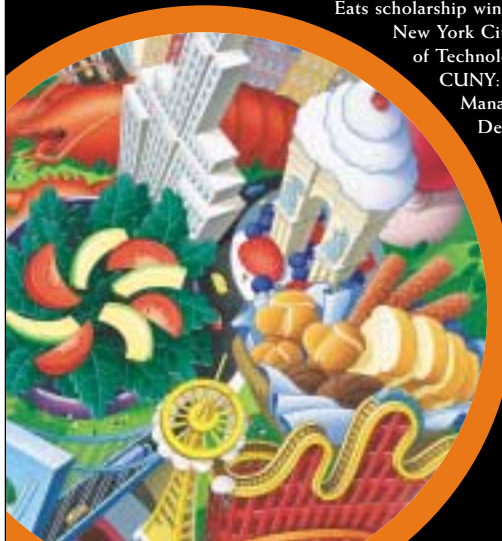
The Surreal Cafe (79 Fifth Ave. at Prospect Place in Park Slope) accepts American Express, Discover, MasterCard and Visa. Entrees: \$8-\$18. The restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Brunch is served Saturdays and Sundays, from 9 am to 4 pm. For reservations, call (718) 857-5252.

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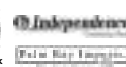
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Designing woman

Set designer talks about a life spent as part of the scenery

By Lisa J. Curtis
GO Brooklyn Editor

Park Slope native Adrienne Lobel has made a career out of making a scene. Or more specifically, of designing scenes.

The 48-year-old set designer works with many of the best choreographers, directors and composers in theaters around the world, in part because she has the brilliant audacity to take her inspiration for the prologue of a French baroque opera-ballet, for example, from a terrarium on a bar overlooking the Gowanus Canal.

The restaurant bar in question is in Montic's Venetian Room on Carroll Street and the opera-ballet, now on stage at New York City Opera in Manhattan through Oct. 16, is Mark Morris' production of Jean-Philippe Rameau's comic opera "Platee," about a nymph who lives in a swamp.

Morris, the Fort Greene-based director and choreographer, has collaborated with Lobel on five productions, including "The Hard Nut," his celebrated send-up of "The Nutcracker," and his acclaimed evening-length dance "L'Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato."

Although this production of "Platee" was originally presented by the Royal Opera Festival Theatre in Edinburgh in 1997, and was last presented at New York City Opera in 2000 (in a sold-out run), Morris hasn't yet tired of Lobel's set.

"It still looks great; it's not dated and not archaic," said the "Platee" director and choreographer. "It's a perfectly excellent physical production."

"Platee" opens with a prologue fea-

turing an assortment of revelers in a pub. They waken one of the patrons, sleeping on a table, and encourage him to tell them a story. What unfolds over the next three acts is the tale of Platee's humiliation at the hands of Jupiter, told through the Mark Morris Dance Group's dancers and the singers of the New York City Opera.

Working hand in glove with Lobel's set are spectacular costumes designed by famed fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi, a Midwood native. That means Platee, the swamp thing in this 18th-century opera-dance, bears a remarkable resemblance to Sea-Monkeys, as depicted on the packaging of the decades-old brine-shrimp-as-pets novelty product. The personification of Folly, meanwhile, is a

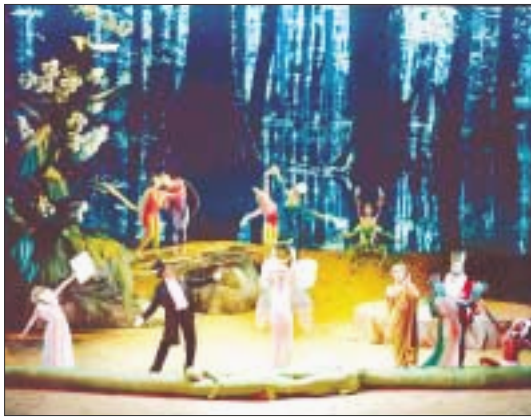
winged, platinum-haired, Marlene Dietrich-like stunner.

While the libretto's prologue by Adrien-Joseph Le Valois d'Orville describes revelers in a vineyard, this production stations them in a pub with the aforementioned terrarium on the bar. As the drunks leave the pub, it darkens, and the terrarium glows with life.

Suggested by lighting designer James F. Ingalls, it's the perfect segue to Act I, which opens inside the terrarium where the homely nymph Platee, played by the (male) singer Jean-Paul Fouchecourt, holds court. The action is set against an enormous branch of berries, a cave and a picture of trees in a swamp that serve to dwarf the petty interactions of the characters.

Lobel's inspiration for the backdrop? The pictures taped to the back of terrariums, of course.

"You don't associate dancing with a swamp," explained Lobel. "There are



Grand vision: Adrienne Lobel's set for the Mark Morris opera-dance, "Platee," now on stage at New York City Opera, took inspiration from her pet toad's terrarium.

lily pads and it's muddy, so how am I going to make a swamp they can dance in? They need a wide-open space. So what's such a place where frogs, toads and creatures can be? A terrarium!"

The dancers in their brilliantly colored costumes slither in and out of an enormous bowl, which also functions as a fountain, on the stage.

Where did Lobel come up with that prop?

"I had a 106-degree fever and I was so sick for about a week," said Lobel, who had been on a business trip in London at the time. "I thought of my old toad's terrarium. He had an orange dish that I put his water in."

Coincidentally, "Platee" was first staged in Great Britain. "We're back in America now, but those productions, 'L'Allegro,' 'Platee' and 'Hard Nut,' originated in Europe at a time when there was more money for the arts; it was not all about how much you can cut," said Lobel, explaining that it's not so easy to get the funding for worthwhile projects in the U.S. "And [Mark and I] are minimalist thinkers to begin with—we don't go out doing gigantic spectacles."

"It's a whole different system [in the United States]," concurred Morris. "It's not just money for productions that is missing, there is zero arts education, which is a disgusting tragedy."

Morris, recently described by the Boston Globe's Richard Dyer as "the most important choreographer since George Balanchine," said that the lack of government money for arts and culture "absolutely ties my hands—especially for work on a big scale."

"L'Allegro" was created in Belgium, when Morris was director of dance at the Theatre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels.

"The resources were unlimited," recalled Lobel. "Sadly that production never would have happened but there and then."

Aside from being "terribly expensive," Lobel believes working on Broadway is "not an imaginative theater, it's a mechanical one."

In contrast, Lobel points out the owl from Morris' "Platee." "Working with Mark is so heavenly. We feel the ridiculous is the most sublime—the owl just walks off the stage," she said. "Any other director would be asking you for flying machines. You watch that owl walk off the stage and it's... what theater should be: as simple and funny as possible. I really like working with him because the solutions are clever and imaginative."

Lobel now lives in Manhattan with her husband, actor Mark Linn-Baker, and their 2-year-old daughter Ruby Beatrice. And although she says she

keeps threatening to retire, Lobel is working on sets for Tobias Picker's "An American Tragedy" (to be staged at the Metropolitan Opera in December 2005) and John Adams' "Doctor Atomic" to premiere at the San Francisco Opera in October 2005.

With both productions, Lobel is working with living composers who are creating the work "as we speak."

"When you are working with a composer on a new piece, they are as influenced by you as you are by them. So that's true collaboration," she said.

Lobel gets her inspiration from many sources; she claims that when she begins working on a set, "I can't even draw without music; music moves my hand." As a jumping-off point for "An American in Paris," which Lobel is designing for New York City Ballet, she is referencing works by Picasso and Braque. Meanwhile, for the swamp vegetation in "Platee," Lobel did her research in a pet store.

That poor plant is based on a plastic plant that I believe I got at Petland," said Lobel. "You know, to keep your pet company. Nothing is natural on that stage. The dish is an actual replica of my pet toad's water dish, blown up many times. He never knew his dish would be a fountain in a baroque opera. You use everything. Maybe out of desperation—or inspiration."

THEATER

New York City Opera's production of "Platee" will continue at the New York State Theater (65th Street at Broadway in Manhattan) through Oct. 16. Performances are Oct. 10 at 7:30 pm, Oct. 14 at 7:30 pm and Oct. 16 at 8 pm. Tickets are \$27-\$115. For more information, go to www.nycopera.com or call (212) 870-5630.

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Top: John Singer Sargent (American 1858-1925), *Cesar Godefrich*, c. 1887, oil on canvas. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. C. Michael Kaplan. Bottom: Kehinde Wiley, *Passing/Posing (Assumption)*, 2003, oil on canvas mounted on panel.

Music first

Good Coffeehouse celebrates 30 years of serving musicians

By Chiara V. Cowan
for The Brooklyn Papers

One of Park Slope's best-kept secrets is celebrating its 30th birthday the best way it knows how—with music and friends.

On a recent Thursday afternoon, Good Coffeehouse Music Parlor co-curator James Reams arrived sweating, out of breath, and obviously overworked, for an interview in Lower Manhattan. Yet he was still smiling. He had just left his job as a special needs middle school teacher on the Lower East Side and was preparing to leave two hours later with his band, the Bamstomers, for Kentucky, to play at the Vinegrove Bluesgrass Festival.

While Reams' days and nights are spent teaching learning-disabled students and playing bluesgrass music with his nationally acclaimed band, in what space is left, he co-curates the lineup at the Good Coffeehouse Music Parlor (GCMF).

"We call it the home of acoustic roots," said Reams, 48, of Park Slope. "It's different than the singer-songwriters at folk music venues today; we have artists who play Cuban, African and American roots-based music and are very into culture."

The Good Coffeehouse Music Parlor is located at 53 Prospect Park West at Second Street in Park Slope. All shows begin at 8 p.m. There is a \$10 donation at the door. Traveling Troubadour Series admission is \$15. Coffee and tea are free. For a schedule of events, call (718) 788-2972 or visit www.brooklynpapers.com.

The most important thing that the GCMF has is music and that is all that matters to co-curators Reams and Tina Aridas.

"At the coffeehouse, it's about an appreciation and joy of the music and a respect for the performers," said fellow Park Slope Aridas, 51. "It's a place where performers can offer their music to an audi-



Paul Geremia performs at the Good Coffeehouse Music Parlor. (Chiara V. Cowan)

ence that is really listening." Since 1974, performers have been getting together to play at the Good Coffeehouse, but Aridas says there is no official written history of the venue. It was founded informally by a group of folk musicians who played there. Anne Kleynen later worked as curator for good music years until Reams took over in 1999.

Reams began playing at the coffeehouse in 1985 and in the early 1990s, Reams and the Bamstomers came together. Reams asked for his input on rejuvenating the coffeehouse after he and the band packed the house on many occasions.

In 1999, Kleynen left and Reams became curator. At that time there was no "park" in its name. For the 30th anniversary, Reams, Aridas and the other coffeehouse committee members introduced "parlor" to differentiate themselves from places like Starbucks.

"Performers shouldn't have to play over her clutter," Aridas said.

"To kick off the 30th anniversary season properly, on Sept. 17-18, the GCMF hosted the seventh annual Park Slope Blues and Old-Time Jamboree, a day and



Special guest: Rhode Island-based musician Paul Geremia sang and played the blues as part of the Traveling Troubadour Series at the Good Coffeehouse Music Parlor in Park Slope on Oct. 1. (At left) Good Coffeehouse co-curator James Reams.

a half of workshops, jamming and concerts of traditional American music including a performance by Reams and the Bamstomers. Then, on Oct. 1, seasoned musician Paul Geremia shared his acoustic blues guitar, ruck harmonica and vocal talent as part of the Traveling Troubadour Series, a new series Reams and Ian Zuck created for the Good Coffeehouse's 30th anniversary. Geremia, a legend from Rhode Island, has toured full-time for the past 38 years.

Upcoming shows include Jose Conde and his band Old Fresca, a blend of Cuban-roots and American funk and rock music on Oct. 15. A salsa lesson will start the first set.

Cory Harris, a native of Denver, Colo., will share his Delta-style bottleneck playing and singing while exploring the African and African-American roots of the blues on Oct. 22, as the Traveling Troubadour Series continues.

One of Reams' favorite memories of GCMF is of a performance by the late Tom De Haven, a renowned Irish musician, and his daughter Maureen, in the mid-'90s. He also fondly recalled a performance by flat-picking guitarist David Grier. "I love music," Reams said. "It's nice to see a world class musician in that room."

Aridas, on the other hand, praises "emerging" performers like Patrick Wichter who pass through the coffeehouse doors.

"It's wonderful to see the growth of a

performer," Aridas said. "We hope he'll always come back to the GCMF." In 1997, "Traditions, New Spirits & Holy Ground," a compilation album to highlight some of the local talent that had performed at the coffeehouse in previous years, was released.

The GCMF committee labors many hours to plan the parlor's scheduled events, which is why Reams and Aridas cannot do it alone. A committee of about six helps with the evening activities from buying bags of ice and welcoming performers to managing the sound and setting up chairs.

Everyone involved in the GCMF is in it for a love of the music. Volunteers sometimes even reach into their own pockets for additional costs. The admission collected at the door is split only between the performer and the coffeehouse society.

"Our goal is a good musical experience for both the performer and the audience," Aridas said.

For 30 years, the GCMF has been providing just that. A mix of emerging and established local performers, as well as nationally touring artists, the GCMF helps many musicians on their way. For some it is a chance to truly be heard. For others it is a ticket to stardom and for others it is a stop along the way. For all, it is a musical experience unlike any other.

"I'm really lucky," Reams said. "I've played at Lincoln Center and the Bottom Line, but one of my favorite places to play is that room. It really has a magical feel. It's a real listening room."

Mami dearest

A workman quietly measured a doorframe last weekend as we sampled dishes from the barely opened Le Dakar Restaurant & Cafe in Clinton Hill, the second outpost of chef Pierre Thiam, whose bistrot Yolele in Bedford-Stuyvesant has earned a steady clientele and accolades from food writers.

Like Yolele, the new cafe, named for the capital of Senegal, serves as backdrop for dramatic African art. And, because she's worked so well as Yolele's good luck charm, Thiam has installed a sculpture of the temperamental goddess, Mami Wata, near the door. As folk goes, those who show gratitude for gifts bestowed will be blessed. You'll feel her spirit after your meal.

But until the gas line is working, Thiam will entice diners with small plates of complex Senegalese dishes. A few try to be tender grills

shrimp over chunks of ripe papaya served with romaine leaves tossed in a deliciously tart lemon-grass and mint dressing; the slightly greasy (in a good way), chunky vegetable spring rolls that are really old-fashioned egg rolls in disguise; and simple slices of mango and avocado, drizzled with the lemon-grass dressing (pictured).

Thiam's "Paris Dakar," a tart topped with thin slices of apples and mango on a crisp, buttery crust, is a delicious way to end the meal.

Le Dakar Restaurant & Cafe (285 Grand Ave., between Lafayette Avenue and Clinton Place in Clinton Hill) accepts American Express, Discover, MasterCard and Visa. The restaurant is open daily for dinner. Until the full menu is available, small plates are \$5-\$10. For more information visit www.dakar-cafe.net or call (718) 398-8900. — Tina Barry

BROOKLYN Nightlife

The Backroom

(Inside Freddy's Bar) 485 Dean St. at Sixth Avenue in Prospect Heights, (718) 622-7035; www.freddybackroom.com

Oct. 9: Suzanne & Bob Powers, 9:30 pm, Face Parade, 10:30 pm, Blue State Band, 11:30 pm, FREE, Oct. 10: JPM, 10 pm, FREE, Oct. 11: Hapkat Poetry 9 pm, FREE, Oct. 12: Will Vireos, 9:30 pm, FREE, Oct. 14: Christian Caplan, 8:30 pm, FREE, Oct. 15: Joe Baroli, 9 pm, FREE, "Night of the Living Dead" (the musical), 10 pm, FREE.

BAM Cafe

30 Lafayette Ave. at Bedford Place in Fort Greene, (718) 636-4100, www.bam.org

Oct. 9: So Percussion, 9 pm, \$10 food/drink minimum; Oct. 18: Soulflam, 9 pm, \$10 food/drink minimum.

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Oct. 13: Suburbaner Sals, 9 pm, FREE.

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Monday: Traveling Cinema, 8 pm, FREE; Tuesday: Slavic Soul Party, 9 pm, \$5, Wednesday: "Night of the Rainforest," 9 pm, \$5, Oct. 9: 8:30 pm, FREE, Oct. 10: Chris Berry's PANAMA, 9 pm, FREE, Oct. 10: Thelma's World's Best, with Shuff, 8 pm, FREE, Oct. 11: Matt Murrells & Tim Kiphus, 9 pm, FREE, Oct. 12: Jenny Scheinman, 7 pm, FREE, Oct. 13: Steve Ericson, Yusef Nakazon, 7 pm, FREE, Doug Vissamiani, Anthony Coleman, 9 pm, \$8 suggested, Oct. 14: Raw Red Rumba Ranch, 9 pm, FREE, Oct. 15: Amy Kohn, 7 pm, FREE, Sep. 16: Sep. 16, FREE.

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Bluestone Bar & Grill

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Cafe 111

111 Court St. at State Street in Downtown Brooklyn, (718) 858-2800, www.cafe111online.com

Oct. 9: Daniels & Benson (of Doctor Son), 8 pm, Kaiser Card, 9 pm, Kara Mar, 10 pm, Regan Party, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 10: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 11: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 12: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 13: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 14: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 15: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 16: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 17: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 18: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 19: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 20: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 21: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 22: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 23: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 24: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 25: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 26: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 27: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 28: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 29: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 30: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4; Oct. 31: The Blue Note, 8 pm, 9 pm, 10 pm, 11 pm, \$4.

Cha Cha's

1227 Hudson Riverwalk at Stillwell Avenue in Coney Island, (718) 964-1305

Saturday: The Brooklyn Brown-Ha-Ha, 9:30 pm, \$5 with a drink minimum; Monday: Gay Men's Soiree, 6 pm, \$10; Oct. 9: MC Line Campbell featuring DJ Gertie, Nicole Korkolis, Todd Wornick, Adam Wade, Tom McCaffrey, Jeff Kunkin, 9:30 pm, \$5 with a drink minimum; Oct. 14: Glam and Gilt Retro Party, 9 pm, \$5.

Chocolate Monkey

329 Flatbush Ave. at Seventh Avenue in Park Slope, (718) 818-8273

Saturday: Espresso a.k.a. Open Mic Poetry talent show, 7 pm, \$5; Sunday: Lounge Party with DJ Sekou and DJ Oskar featuring house, techno, and rare grooves, 11 pm, FREE; Tuesday: "Singles After Work Speed Dating," 5 pm, FREE; Wednesday: "DJ Rock," 7 pm, FREE; Thursday: Host Terry Billy featuring live music, 8 pm, FREE.

TALK TO...

To list your events in Brooklyn Nightlife, please give us as much notice as possible. Include name of venue, address with cross street, phone number for the public to call. Web site address, dates, times and admission or ticket prices. Send listings and color photos of performers to talkto@brooklynpapers.com or via fax at (718) 834-9278. Listings are free and printed on a space available basis. We regret we cannot take listings over the phone.

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BROOKLYN Nightlife

Continued from page 12...

10 Restaurant

119 Kent Ave. at North Seventh Street in Williamsburg. (718) 388-1200. www.10restaurantdowntown.com
 Saturday: DJ spins salsa and house, 10 pm. Ladies FREE all night, men \$5 after 11 pm. Monday: Karaoke and Monday Night Football FREE champagne for women before 11 pm, 8 pm. FREE. Thursday: College All Out with DJ Pumps spinning hip-hop, house, R&B, reggae, salsa, bachata, 9 pm. Ladies FREE all night, men \$5 after 11 pm (21 and over). Friday: Live jazz featuring Puma-Swank, 7:30 pm. FREE. DJ spins salsa and house, 10 pm. Ladies FREE all night, men \$5 after 11 pm.

JRG Fashion Cafe

177 Flatbush Ave. at Atlantic Avenue in Fort Greene. (718) 399-7079.
 Fridays, Saturdays: Live DJ, 11 pm, \$10 after midnight.

The Jazz

129 Mercer Street (bet. at Kosciuszko Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 453-7822. www.thejazzclub.com
 Monday: Jam Session, 8 pm, \$5. Oct. 9: Billy Simmonds Trio, 9 pm, \$10. Oct. 15: Bruce Williams Trio, 9 pm, \$10.

Kili Bar-Cafe

81 Hoyt St. at State Street in Borough Hill. (718) 855-5574.
 Tuesday: Open Acoustics (live and poet), 9 pm. FREE. Friday: DJ Chappi plays rock, hip-hop and funk, 10:30 pm.

Laila Lounge

113 N. Seventh St. at Wythe Avenue in Williamsburg. (718) 486-6791. www.lailalounge.com

Sunday: Jazz Jam Session, 9 pm. STBA. Wednesday: Sonneters night and open mic, 8 pm. STBA. Oct. 9: D.J. Wilson, 10 pm. DJ Bardo, midnight. STBA. Oct. 10: Big Vega, 7:30 pm, 9:30 pm. FREE. Oct. 12: (Upstart) DJ Marshall, 10 pm. (Downstart) Whiskey Beach, Rock Reggae, Alex Lowery, 9 pm. STBA. Oct. 14: (Upstart) "Discovered," a night of cover songs with DJ Spazky, 10 pm. STBA. (Downstart) Matt Hawk and guests, 9 pm. STBA. Oct. 15: "Future Shock" with DJ Elanware and weekly guests, 7 pm. STBA.

Liberty Heights Tap Room

34 Van Dyke St. at Dwight Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant. (718) 246-8502.
 Thursday: Open mic, 8:30 pm. FREE. Oct. 9: Lex Grey and the Urban Pioneers, 10:30 pm. FREE.

The Lucky Cat

245 Grand St. at Brooklyn Street in Williamsburg. (718) 782-0437. www.theluckycat.com
 Saturday: "Sugarlight Saturday" DJs spin punk rock, 10 pm. FREE. Monday: Chase club, 8 pm. FREE. Wednesday: Heat, with DJ Jeremy, 10 pm. FREE. Friday: Socratic Heavy Heat, hosted by DJ Subzero, 7 pm. FREE. FutureFest Sessions with DJ Sport Casual, 10 pm. FREE. Oct. 9: Holy rollers with Hello Nurse and F. Lims, 9 pm. FREE. Oct. 12: Open Mic, 8 pm. Dan Linnert, 9 pm. Oct. 13: Get the People's 9 pm. FREE. Oct. 13: Get the People's 9 pm. FREE. Oct. 13: Get the People's 9 pm. FREE. Oct. 13: Get the People's 9 pm. FREE.

The LuLu Lounge

(Under Taco Taci) 134 N. Sixth St. at Bedford Avenue in Williamsburg. (718) 718-2181. www.lululounge.com
 Sunday: Jose Luis Martinez Trio, 7 pm. FREE. Monday: "Random" Alex Stand-Up, 8 pm. \$6 includes free drink. Thursday, Friday, Saturday: "Karaoke Nights," 8 pm. FREE. Oct. 13: "Shut on Stage," a comedy show, 8 pm. \$6 includes free drink.

Magnetic Field

97 Atlantic Ave. at Henry Street in Brooklyn Heights. (718) 834-0009. www.magneticfield.com
 Oct. 9: The Invention, 10:30 pm. \$3. Oct. 11: "Rock n' Roll DJ Exchange," 9 pm. FREE. Oct. 15: DJ Andy with lots of rock and soul action, 9 pm. FREE.

Magnolia

486 Sixth Ave. at 12th Street in Park Slope. (718) 397-4214.
 Tuesday: Jam Session with The Noah Haido Trio, 10 pm. FREE with \$5 drink minimum. Oct. 9: George Mel Trio, 10 pm. FREE. Oct. 15: Joel Chasin Trio, 10 pm. FREE.

Northsix

64 N. Sixth St. at Wythe Avenue in Williamsburg. (718) 599-5103. www.northsix.com

Oct. 9: Hot Snakes, Mr. Airplane Man, Pretzels, 8 pm, \$10. Oct. 10: David Berman, The Synthesizers, The Frenetics, 8 pm, \$7. Oct. 11: (Downstart) 90s/80s/70s/60s/50s/40s/30s/20s/10s/0s/Almanac, Mommy & Daddy, Fanning Lion, 8 pm. STBA. Oct. 12: (Upstart) CMU Music Marathon with Cotto, 22, Currtuck County, Behind The Acpas, 7 pm. STBA. Oct. 14: CMU Music Marathon with Saturday Look Good to Me, Aloha, Backyard Alien, Decadly Viscera, I'm Still Excited, ZZZZ, 10 pm, \$10. Oct. 15: CMU Music Marathon with The Fall, Coachwhips, Longtime Slim, Pans and Labor, 227, Intelligence, 7 pm. FREE. (Downstart) CMU Music Marathon with Bongbong, Fast Four, 7 pm. STBA.

Office Ops

57 Thame St. at Morgan Avenue, 2nd floor in Williamsburg. (718) 418-2509. www.officeops.org
 Oct. 14: Salsa State with Big Ritmo, Pencil Grass, and DJ Rai, 9 pm. \$5 (includes free drink).

Palmira's

41 Clark St. at Hicks Street in Brooklyn Heights. (718) 237-4100.
 Oct. 9: Kasha St. Joan Trio, 8:30 pm. FREE. Oct. 10: Kasha St. Joan Trio, mid-

night, FREE. Oct. 15: Joel Forrester, 8:30 pm. FREE.

Peggy O'Neills

1157 1st Ave. at 8th Street in Bay Ridge. (718) 748-1200. www.peggy-oneills.com

Pete's Candy Store

701 1st Ave. at Richardson Street in Williamsburg. (718) 303-3770. www.petescandy.com
 Sunday: Open Mic, 5 pm-8 pm. FREE. Oct. 9: Qovak & Jennings, 9 pm. Robert Duffins, 10 pm. Uka Mox, 11 pm. FREE. Oct. 10: Colin McInerney, 8 pm. Marty Charles, 9:30 pm. FREE. Oct. 11: McGowan, 9 pm. The Isles, 10 pm. Kik Smith, 11 pm. FREE. Oct. 12: London 9 pm. Norfolk & Western, 10 pm. Static Film, 11 pm. FREE. Oct. 13: Julian Island (solo), 10 pm. FREE. Oct. 14: Maya Don, 8 pm. Ben Rafal, 9 pm. Luke Temple, 10 pm. Damien Junda, 11 pm. FREE. Oct. 15: Alkon, 8 pm. N. Lannon, 10 pm. Bitter Sister Wines, 11 pm. FREE.

Ripple Bar

769 Washington Ave. at Sterling Place in Crown Heights. www.ripplebar.com
 Monday: "Musical Jamboree," \$1 off for California IDs only, all night, all drinks, 10 pm. FREE. Oct. 9: DJ Bruce Lee, 10 pm. FREE. Oct. 10: Dita Anton and Uka-ch, 10 pm. FREE. Oct. 14: DJ Brian Philip Morris, 10 pm. FREE. Oct. 15: DJ Elanware, 10 pm. FREE.

Sideshows by the Seashore

3006 W. 12th St. at Surf Avenue in Coney Island. (718) 372-1595. www.coneyisland.com

Oct. 9: "Crespoth at the Freshhouse" (Hunted House), 7 pm-midnight, \$7.50 adults, \$5 children under 12. Oct. 10: "Crespoth at the Freshhouse" (Hunted House), 7 pm-midnight, \$7.50 adults, \$5 children under 12. Oct. 11: "Crespoth at the Freshhouse" (Hunted House), 7 pm-midnight, \$7.50 adults, \$5 children under 12. Oct. 12: "Crespoth at the Freshhouse" (Hunted House), 7 pm-midnight, \$7.50 adults, \$5 children under 12.

Sistas' Place

456 N. 2nd Ave. at Jefferson Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant. (718) 388-1766.
 Oct. 9: Charlie "Sister" Quince, 9 pm, 10:30 pm, \$20 in advance, \$25 day of the show.

Southpaw

125 Fifth Avenue at 1st Place in Park Slope. (718) 230-0236. www.southpaw.com

Oct. 9: Sky Saxon & the Seeds plus Bob Log II, The Town Bikes, The Stallers, 8 pm, \$8. Oct. 11: 13P invites you to The Triakakaphila Prom, 8 pm. STBA. Oct. 12: The Squeezing Machine, Bats, Gutbucket, 8 pm, \$8. Oct. 13: Magistrate, 8 pm, \$8. Oct. 14: CMU Music Marathon with Koda Sankara, Les Sans Culottes, Morningwood, Human Television, 8 pm, \$10. Oct. 15: CMU Bloodshot Records Showcase with John Landroff, 8 pm. STBA. Oct. 14: Wives, Bart/1999/Robby Robinson, Princess, 8 pm. STBA.

Teddy's Bar and Grill

94 Berry St. at North Eighth Street in Williamsburg. (718) 384-9787.
 Sunday: Live jazz and pop standards, 9 pm. FREE.

Tommy's Tavern

1041 Manhattan Ave. at Freeman Street in Greenpoint. (718) 383-9099.
 Oct. 9: Athletic Automation, The Creeping Nodules, 8 pm. STBA. Oct. 14: Wives, Bart/1999/Robby Robinson, Princess, 8 pm. STBA.

Trash Bar

424 2nd St. at 1st Avenue in Williamsburg. (718) 599-1000. www.trashbar.com

Oct. 9: Dot Dot presents The Spits, The Shermans, The Spinozas, DC Snipers, 7 pm, \$8. Oct. 10: Ballroom, 8:30 pm. STBA. Oct. 11: Solid Gold, The People, The New Spits, 8:30 pm. STBA. Oct. 12: New Fantastic, Charlie, Plot to Blow up the Earth, 8:30 pm. STBA. Oct. 13: The Bloods, 9 pm, 10:30 pm. STBA. Oct. 14: The Caravans, 11 pm, 12:30 pm. STBA. Oct. 15: Steve Black presents "The Ladies Room" with Sex Slaves, 54 Nude Honey (Japan), 8:30 pm. School Trauma Flashback, 9:30 pm. Black, 10:30 pm. Arai, 11:30 pm. Gorch Fock, 12:30 am, \$7.

Two Boots

514 Second St. at Seventh Avenue in Park Slope. (718) 499-3253. www.two-boots.com

200 Fifth

200 Fifth Ave. at Sackett Street in Park Slope. (718) 638-2925. www.200fifth.net

Friday: Friday Night Salsa with Dita Barton and Big Will spinning salsa, reggae, hip-hop, 10 pm, 10:30 pm, \$10.

Waterfront Ale House

155 Atlantic Ave. at Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights. (718) 522-3794. www.waterfrontalehouse.com

Oct. 9: Renaud Perrot Trio, 11 pm. FREE.

Williamsburg Music Center

367 Bedford Ave. at South Fifth Street in Williamsburg. (718) 384-1654. www.wmccjazz.com

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— Chiara V. Cowan



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PARENT

Tips for a fun but scary Halloween

Q: What precautions can parents take to ensure a pleasant Halloween?
 A: What's great fun for one child is sure to scare another. One 4-year-old boy was even alarmed by his own dark pirate make-up, and asked his mother to tone it down.

Before Halloween arrives, youngsters need to be coached about what to expect — not just about safety rules, but also about what's real and what isn't. Not all children like surprises, and they count on their parents and teachers to ease them into costume time.

For little goblins and princesses just learning about trick-or-treating, look at things from a child's point of view. Scary music, strange costumes and wild makeup can be unnerving if one isn't accustomed to them — especially all at once.

This is the time of year when some parents find that kids are disturbed by masks and costumes.

For example, as preschoolers blur fantasy and reality, they're unable to keep in mind that a real person is under the mask.

One 3-year-old boy watched his dressed-up preschool classmates from afar, observed silently with his mouth open, then entered the group after the kids agreed to take off their masks and show their faces.

Another mother whose first son was petrified of masks made costumes and masks available among the playthings for her two younger children. They were able to explore masks at their own pace.

Respect the limits your children are comfortable with. Let them observe and participate when they're ready. (Homeowners in costume should remember to keep their distance when youngsters arrive at their door.)

Alternatives for safety's sake:

- Since Oct. 31 falls on a Sunday this year, Friday or Saturday would be a good time for a Halloween party that replaces trick-or-treating.
- Halloween is no simple matter for children with food allergies and their parents. Peanuts are one of the most common foods that cause reactions for children under age 6. Safe alternatives for treats to hand out: pencils, coins or small toys.
- Safety tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:
 - Warn children not to eat any treats before an adult has examined them for evidence of tampering or potential for allergic reactions.
 - When buying a costume, mask, beard and wig, look for the label "flame resistant." Although this label doesn't mean these items won't catch fire, it does indicate the items will resist burning and should extinguish quickly once removed from the ignition source.
 - To minimize the risk of contact with candles or other sources of ignition, avoid costumes made with flimsy materials and outfits with big, baggy sleeves or billowing skirts.
 - Buy or make costumes that are light and bright enough to be clearly visible to motorists.
 - For greater visibility, decorate or trim costumes with reflective tape that will glow in the beam of a car's headlights. Bags or sacks should

older, responsible child. Children should walk, not run, from house to house.

- Homeowners, if you're expecting trick-or-treaters, remove anything that could be an obstacle from lawns, steps and porches. Keep candle jack-o'-lanterns away from landings and doorsteps where costumes could brush against the flame.
- Clear your yard of ladders, hoses, dog leashes and flowerpots that can trip the costumed characters.
- Keep your pets indoors and away from trick-or-treaters.
- Trick-or-treaters of all ages also need reminding: Don't zigzag across streets, run out from between parked cars, or run across lawns to get from house to house.
- Instead, use sidewalks where possible, cross at corners, stay with your group and only go to homes where the residents have outside lights on as a sign of welcome.

Can you help?
 "My granddaughter is bright, but at 22 months she still puts things in her mouth — anything she picks up off the floor."
 — a grandmother in Brooklyn

If you have tips or a question, call our toll-free hotline any time at (800) 827-1092 or e-mail us at p2ptips@att.net.

also be light-colored or decorated with reflective tape.

• Make costumes simple and short enough to prevent children from tripping. Children should wear well-fitting shoes, not mother's high heels.

• A natural mask of hygienic cosmetics is preferable to a loose-fitting mask that might restrict breathing or obscure vision. If a mask is used, make sure it fits securely and has eyeholes large enough to allow full peripheral vision.

• Young children should be accompanied by an adult or an

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THRUWEEK

Review

Diminutive leading man rises to the challenge of Peter DuBois' 'Richard III'

By Kevin Filipski
for The Brooklyn Papers

Staging Shakespeare's highly charged political play "Richard III" — with its duplicitous ruler lusting after more power at the expense of his trusting subjects is another example of the Bard's continued relevance, according to Prospect Heights resident Peter DuBois, who directs the play now onstage at the Public Theater in Manhattan.

"Actually, Shakespeare is more relevant today than he was in his own time," said the 24-year-old who, after heading a theater in Juneau, Alaska for five years, is now an associate producer at the Public.

"We know how power is manipulated. Then, they didn't have access to power that we do. So it's fascinating that, 400 years later, Shakespeare is right on the money."

Of course, that doesn't mean DuBois' "Richard III" is set at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

"It's like Arthur Miller said when he did 'The Crucible,' which

THEATER

"Richard III" is at the Public Theater, 425 Lafayette St. at East Fourth St. in Manhattan, through Oct. 24. Showtimes are Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m. in addition, there are performances Oct. 13 at noon, and Oct. 20 at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$50, and are on sale at the Public Theater box office, on-line at www.publictheater.org, and via Telecharge, (212) 229-6200. Quik Trk, discounted rush tickets, are sold to the general public when available one-half-price before curtain time to any non-sold-out performance.

he wrote about McCarthyism: he needed to go back to the Salem trials to tell that story," said DuBois. "With 'Richard,' it's more interesting to create the parallel instead of pointing out the obvious; how close it is to present-day Washington. You say to yourself while watching, 'History hasn't changed.'"

DuBois has more pressing issues in his first-ever Shakespearean stag-

ing at the Public, especially his decision to cast the dwarf Peter Dinklage — star of Tom McCarthy's 2003 award-winning film "The Station Agent" — in the title role.

"I was talking with a friend, an L.A.-based playwright in a wheelchair," said DuBois. "And we talked about how Richard is always played by a good-looking guy who becomes this person with a hump, and how great it would be if we could cast a disabled actor. And Peter [Dinklage] had been in an interview that he'd like to play Richard, and George Wolfe [producer of the Public Theater] saw that and contacted him."

"Meanwhile, I wanted to do 'Richard' at the Public, and George told me about Peter's interest, so it seemed fated that we'd do this project together."

DuBois was impressed by Dinklage's performance in "The Station Agent" but had to make sure he could undertake the rigors of playing one of Shakespeare's most difficult villainous characters.

"There was a workshop process before we cast the show, and we



Justers take direction: (From left to right) Peter DuBois, director of "Richard III" at the Public Theater, with cast members Peter Vack and Connor Paolo.

worked with [Dinklage] for a full week before we cast him," DuBois recalls. "We did the workshop to see what would be like — since you always build a production of 'Richard' around the leading actor, we went through this exciting process of seeing Peter in the role and seeing how charismatic he is, and how effortless the quality of his acting is. He feels real empathy

for the character."

Dinklage's commanding presence as Richard is underscored by his physical stature: his strength and power come from within, and his lack of height is never a handicap; on the contrary, it becomes part of his struggle on the other characters and, by extension, the throne of England.

"There are moments when you

can forget about his height because he's such a great actor," said DuBois. "At times he manipulates his height: he talks about how he's half of Edward, which in the text, means something like lacking looks or generosity of spirit, but here it's his size."

"We also play with lighting and shadows, and it's fun seeing him taking down these men who are

much larger than he is," he said. "What's thrilling about Peter is he's the anti-Oliver Richard; [Sir Laurence Olivier played up the melodramatic villain, while Peter plays with the fun of it, how crazy and mad power can become. What's great about Peter is his comic timing: the play hinges on the audience wanting to go on this ride with Richard, and Peter gets them to do that."

An early scene testing both director and actor is Richard's confrontation with lovely Lady Anne — whose father and husband he's killed — and slowly, methodically transforming her from grieving widow to his future wife and queen.

"When she says, 'Thou dost infect mine eyes,' it could mean several things," said DuBois. "It's very important that she's grieving for her husband and father alone, and so her decision to be with Richard is not because she's in love with him, but because everyone she loves is dead and Richard takes advantage of her vulnerability. And Peter's so charming as an actor and as this character that he can play off that."

DuBois also imagined a riveting "coup de theatre" to begin the play: a wordless tableau set to the sweeping music of Beethoven's "Eroica," a nationalist tone poem, "Ma Vlast."

"I wanted to create this stew of emotions at the beginning that introduces the characters," said DuBois.

"You can see the discontent beginning among the people, and it's not only because of the war, but to throw this entire world into disarray."

Where to Go

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal

SAT, OCT 9
OUTDOORS AND TOURS
STUYVESANT HEIGHTS: Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment offers a tour of the landmark District of Bedford-Stuyvesant. \$11, 9 members, 11 am to 1 pm. Meet in front of Boys and Girls Club, intersection of Stuyvesant Avenue and Fulton Street. (718) 788-8500.

WORKING WATERFRONT: Brooklyn Historical Society offers a guided boat tour along the East River waterfront. Pick up at Fulton Ferry Landing at 11:05 am. \$20, \$18 members. Reservations needed. (212) 742-1960.

PERFORMANCE
NEXT WAVE: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents "The Dybbuk," a literary treatment of Jewish folklore's "dybbuk" and a commentary on Polish-Jewish cultural issues. \$20, \$25, \$45, 7:30 pm. Henry Theater, 425 Lafayette St. (718) 636-4100.

SHAKESPEARE: Working Mut Productions presents a site-specific production of "Hamlet." \$10, 7:30 pm. Center at 22nd Avenue and 15th Street, Williamsburg. (212) 868-3760.

COMEDY: Strivell Performers perform the musical "Nursense." 8 pm. St. Ann's Church, 333 6th Ave. (718) 395-5272.

ARTS AT ST. ANN'S: New York City Chapter of National Geographic Society presents "The Dybbuk." \$20, 8 pm. St. Ann's Church, 333 6th Ave. (718) 395-5272.

READY TO RUMBLE: Gotham Girls Roller Derby, 17 females face off 4 pm. Intersection of Union Avenue and Mulford Avenue, under the BOE overpass. After party follows at Manhattan Club. (917) 749-9278.

COMEDY: Strivell Performers perform the musical "Nursense." 8 pm. St. Ann's Church, 333 6th Ave. (718) 395-5272.

DANCE: Red Wall Dance Theater performs new work by Mary Ann Wall, 5:15, 5:45 and 8 pm. 8 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 785-4400.

ARTS AT ST. ANN'S: "Good Samaritans," a new work written and directed by Richard Maxwell. 8 pm. St. Ann's Church, 333 6th Ave. (718) 395-5272.

THEATER: The Brooklyn College Theater Department presents "Phool." \$5, 8 pm. 2900 Bedford Ave. (718) 951-4500.

MUSIC: BRIC Studio presents "Sonic Collage," with live music and a program of jazz with Chinese and Japanese influences. 8 pm. 330 7th Ave. (718) 552-1892.

CHILDREN
BARNES AND NOBLE: Kids of all ages are welcome to attend a reading of tales by Eric Hill. 11 am. 106 Court St. (718) 246-4996. Free.

BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: Presents "Go Kiddy! Health Week." 11 am to 4 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 785-4400.

PUPPETWORKS: presents "Hansel and Gretel" by The Brothers Grimm. Recommended for ages 4 and up. \$6, 7:30 pm. Reservations required. 338 5th Ave. (718) 965-0001.

AUDITION: Decarone invites kids to try out for its Kids Company dance troupe. 3 pm. Berkeley Carroll School, 181 Lincoln Place. (718) 522-4696.

OTHER
SOLO SHOW: Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition presents The Solo Art Show and Solo Performance Series. Noon to 5 pm. 499 Van Brunt St. (718) 369-1515.

RUMMAGE SALE: Bargains on housewares, linens, clothing, jewelry, books, toys and more. 10 am to 4 pm. Flatbush Reformed Church, Flatbush and Church avenues. (718) 284-5140.

Flea Market: Old stuff and new stuff in Red Hook. 10 am to sunset. 399 Van Brunt St. (718) 369-1515.

OPEN HOUSE: Open House New York invites the community to explore sites of historic and contemporary significance in neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs. Brooklyn Historical Society participates in the event and invites the public to explore its historic building. 10 am to 4 pm. 128 Pierpont St. (718) 222-4111. Free.

MEETING: Older Women's League meets to discuss issues of the upcoming election. 10:30 am. Brooklyn College, New Ingersoll Hall, room 432. (718) 950-2900.

SUN, OCT 10
OUTDOORS AND TOURS
BIKE TOUR: NYC Chapter of National Geographic Society presents its 20th annual bike tour. Three routes: 30, 60 or 100 miles. \$20 registration fee. 7:30 am. Start at South Street Seaport. (718) 788-8500.

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SUN, OCT 17

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SAT, OCT 9

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Jamprov blues

An evening in the life of a rag-tag, down-on-his-luck performer

By Drew Pizarra
for The Brooklyn Papers

"You're not wearing black?"
"Was I supposed to wear black?"
"Didn't you get my e-mails?"
"No."

So started my sojourn as an actor with Jamprov, an evening of improvisational comedy. What followed was a mad scramble — initially for a black T-shirt, later for a shred of dignity — in which impresario Don Slovin and a ragtag band of down-on-their-luck performers (myself included) attempted to assemble a cohesive comedy show at the Brooklyn Lyceum in Gowanus after a mere two hours of rehearsing at the Devil Dance Studio on Union Street.

And while initially I wondered whether we could possibly generate enough material in such a short time, I eventually came to worry whether the night would ever end.

Exploration 1

"Walk around the stage. Get acquainted with it."

The Brooklyn Lyceum, a former bathhouse circa 1910, possesses an attractive, cavernous performance space, yet here I was striding just four paces across, six paces deep before I hit the walls. We'd been sentenced to the snack bar's adjacent seating area. Navigating around the mismatched furniture, I slowed down long enough to stare through the dark glass panes that over-

looked the legitimate stage.

Then Don yelled to move around with more energy. "On a scale of 1 to 10, you should be a 7," he shouted. Despite his enthusiasm, I felt like a negative three.

Exploration 2

"You should be willing to be pushed around a little bit."

At least Don is forthright about his approach. He'll tell you what to do and why you're doing it wrong. There's no time for questions, only corrections. When I mimed a cymbal crash, I was told I was holding the instrument improperly; later, when I admitted I'd made a mistake in a three-line dialogue, Don's original negative assessment was retracted.



Cheap laughs: Don Slovin hosts the next improv jam at the Brooklyn Lyceum on Oct. 16. Admission is \$5.

Forsaking the "yes, and..." method that's the cornerstone of modern improv, Don rejoined my scene opener of "You can't go to the movies if you don't clean your room" with the brusque reply, "I don't want to go to the movies. So there."

Curran.

Exploration 3

"Imagine you're an animal. Use a body part to point at objects in the room. Name them in

the voice of this animal."

I chose a snake, sticking out my tongue at the surrounding shuffles and the exit signs. (How the latter mocked me!)

After we'd gotten into character, we each took the stage. Sticking close to our own realities was encouraged so the 16-year-old high school student's new persona was a 17-year-old who attended a different school. Also receiving a thumbs up was a slow-witted 20-something who played a slow-witted 30-something. (Now there's a stretch.) My own isping socialite of a certain age was frowned upon.

But that's who I really am!

Explorations 4-10

"What am I doing here?"

The muddled lesson plan continued. Improvisational structures were sketchily presented, then hastily executed. Most of these present (primarily regulars) were simply getting refresher courses. But newcomers like myself who wondered how any exercise actually worked were blithely told, "You'll see."

Well I did and it didn't. So where was the logic behind this reckless open-door policy and the stream-rolling tutorial? Nervous energy contributed to giddy laughter but the happiest members of the cast were clearly the two latecomers who showed up right before show time. They knew

the best approach was to avoid the chaos that preceded.

Performance

"It—you?"

The regulars appeared at ease with the fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants haphazardness, the impetuous changes to the lineup done offstage, even the lack of laughs that greet most scenes.

Some of the audience was smiling, a few giggles occurred. But how much of that

was due to the fact that six of the eight present were directly related to the 16-year-old making his NYC stage debut?

My single attention-grabbing moment — when I blurted the F-word in response to the lame one-liner — elicited a raised eyebrow from the mother cradling the baby. (Are you allowed to curse in front of an infant?)

Otherwise, I was thankfully invisible.

Afterthought

Who are these actors?

"Do you do this often?" I asked one of the two latecomers. "Um, yeah," he responded sheepishly. As we gathered in the hall afterwards for a group hug that signaled my release, Don gathered money from each of the participants. Five bucks a head in this instance. Opportunity comes cheap.

The next day, I received the following email: "Thanks for your talented contribution. Layla, D."

But what had I given and what I had received? It takes a steady kind of actor to survive the grueling hazing of Jamprov. As for the audience, they're all in the family.

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Council we says 'bridge blocker' vote

Walentas continues to modify high-rise

By Jess Wisloski
The Brooklyn Papers

A City Council vote on a plan to build a high-rise apartment building on Water Street in DUMBO that could potentially block views of and from the Brooklyn Bridge was held over this week while the developers — the father-and-son team of David and Jed Walentas — amend their proposal, council sources said.

"There are still discussions going on between all parties, and we are laying the vote over as long as possible to give as much time as possible to discussions," said Councilman Tony Avella, who chairs the Zoning and Franchises subcommittee. "I can't remember in the two-and-a-half-

years I've been chair that we've delayed a vote to this extent."

While he said the Walentas submitted a second amended version of their plan the vote has been held off so all the members can first become familiar with the latest changes.

"Based on [the changes] I've seen," which Avella said were not much different, "I'm still open to the project."

Councilman David Yassky, in whose district the project is located, said through a spokesman that the latest revisions were still unacceptable.

"I think to us they're very much superficial changes," said Yassky spokesman Evan Thies. "From what I understand the change would be moving the building a little bit further back from the bridge and taking that

additional bulk and adding it to the height of the building. That is not acceptable to the community, and it's not acceptable to us."

Thies said Yassky has been lobbying members of the Land Use committee to vote against the project if it makes it out of the subcommittee.

But some community groups are afraid the delay in voting is indicative of something more.

"The fact that something this important involving the Brooklyn Bridge is being conducted in the corridors," Stanton said, "they're just big wizards over there in the speaker's office, controlling everything."

Several calls to Two Trees Management, the development company of the Walentas, were not returned.

Stanton said the delay in vot-

ing on the plan is less about the new designs, and more about power wielding.

"Nobody's taking that seriously, really. I don't know anybody who's taking that seriously," she said of the designs.

Avella echoed her sentiment.

"It was unclear to me what it meant, but basically they were taking a corner off the building," Avella said of the latest modifications. "The corner closest to the bridge, further from the bridge," he said, adding that it was hard to understand because "they didn't have time to do complete architectural drawings."

The plan, which promises to build an estimated 200 apartments and comes with a commitment by Jed Walentas that should Two Trees' application for an 80-



St. Ann's Warehouse in DUMBO, where David Walentas would like to build a high-rise apartment building.

20 tax abatement be accepted, they'd provide 20 percent of the units for low-income residents. Below that would sit 8,000 square feet of retail space.

The building would stand 178 feet tall, according to the last plans submitted by the group.

The amended plan moved the tallest point of the building 133 feet away from the bridge roadway, instead of the originally planned 70 feet.

Yassky, who was at first suspected to be a supporter of the plan, because he took a few months to state his opinion on the proposal, said he recognized the need for such housing, but not at that detriment to Brooklyn's history.

"There needs to be housing in the community and it's a good thing that needs to be built, but in a way where we can preserve the character of the community and prospect of the Brooklyn Bridge," said Thies.

MARTY ON DOLLY...

Continued from page 1

can serve without hanging over their heads," he said.

Williams declined to comment for this article. The Conflicts of Interest board, whose officials have stated that they are bound to confidentiality in all cases, even those involving public officials, was unable to confirm any information regarding the Williams inquiry. Not even the complainant will be notified one way or the other, he said.

While Davies said completion of typical investigations "have taken between a month and two years," in cases that don't require much digging, they usually offer advice to the involved parties in addition to their enforcement role.

"We have no power to remove a person from office," he said, but contradicting Markowitz's statement, Davies told The Papers, "Whoever has the authority to appoint someone has the power to remove them."

Usually, he said, the person under investigation will be notified about indiscretions by the board. "If our board, for example, believes that a person in City Council is acting in violation of the law, they'll probably be told that, if not by us, then by the Department of Investigations."

"You could have, for example, someone who's working for an outside firm that's doing business with our own agency. We'll find that in violation of Chapter 68 of the [City] Charter," he said. In such cases, Davies said, the

board would notify the subject of the investigation but not make it public.

"If we conveyed something to Ms. Williams or Marty Markowitz or the people involved they'd be free to share it, but we wouldn't be free to share it," said the conflicts board chief.

A complaint against Williams for her ownership in the Nets was lodged Aug. 26 by the anti-arena group Develop-Don't Destroy Brooklyn (DDDB).

In a letter filed with Davies, Daniel Goldstein, a spokesman for DDDB, wrote that Williams' investment in the team was a violation of Chapter 68 of the City Charter, and by serving on the commission as it reviewed the Downtown Brooklyn Development Plan's changes in zoning she had already violated the charter by reviewing and voting on the changes. The Downtown Plan initially included a portion of the arena site, which was later removed from that plan.

"As a planning commissioner, Williams can smooth the way for this project, which is going to line her pockets at taxpayers' expense — and she's drawing a \$45,131 city salary while she does it," Goldstein charged.

Also in the letter, Goldstein detailed that the charter provision applies to all paid city officers. The law states that "any officer with ownership interest in firms doing business with the city has a conflict of interest."

Park Slope handballers lose their best courts to condos

By Jess Wisloski
The Brooklyn Papers

Handball players who regularly flock to J.J. Byrne Park in Park Slope have had to deal with the shutdown of the two most competitive of the park's eight courts due to construction on an adjacent lot.

The 12-story condominium being built by developer Shaya Boymlgreen next to the courts will replace a long-empty storefront that used to house a plumbing supply store. Normally none of this would matter to the handball players.

But the project has shut down the two courts that are deemed — by unspoken court etiquette — for use by only the highest echelon of players.

In the gargantuan dirt hole next to the closed courts, iron beams surround the pit, holding back walls of earth. Where the pavement of the courts cuts off, the soil underneath just falls away, separated by tarp-covered metal

fencing that hides the ditch from view. Through a peephole, an earth-mover seems poised in the pit, but one regular player said he had not seen it move for weeks. The lack of movement has caused players to leave the courts but not lost forever.

Mike Martinez, who comes from Marine Park to use these courts, said he didn't mind the work being done until the courts closed in mid-July. He

said many people thought the courts were going to be repaired, but months later they've abandoned that notion. "I came here because the competition was here," said Martinez, who thought only the Coney Island courts were similar in the caliber of player they attract.

"A lot of good players come to this court," he said. "Now, we're the main players, we take over these courts," he said, emphasizing the remaining ones, "the kids can't play."

Mike Martinez plays handball at the courts on Fourth Avenue and Third Street on Tuesday. New condominium construction has temporarily closed the courts.

He gestures down the wall, where adults in fact are competing — some for money — slap a little rubber ball against the wall.

Like a split-screen, teenagers take over the opposite side of the wall, and only two children attempt to have their own game, but often get chased after a ball only to lose their spot.

"The courts are crowded now," said Sunday Miranda, 18. He said the courts currently being used by teenagers like him were only used by

DEALIN' RATNER...



Bruce Ratner leaves the House of the Lord Church on Atlantic Avenue at Bond Street Thursday after announcing deal with the Rev. Herbert Daughtry (at right).

younger children before; it is the kid's pool of the handball world.

"Now that we're here they have nowhere to play," he said. A girl smoking a cigarette casually hits the ball against the wall with a sidearm by herself, again and again. Others sit on a small staircase leading to basketball courts, while Miranda talks about a rumor he heard that the condo developer wants to try to eliminate those courts to expand the development. An-

other story he heard was that the flag on the court was cracking and slanted, so it was closed for safety reasons. Neither story is the case, according to a spokesman for the city Department of Parks and Recreation.

"They're building a safety zone between the recreation area and the work that they're doing," the spokesman said. "They're trying to be cautious; if there are any issues or if anything is damaged they've been more than cooperative."

The Parks Department spokesman noted that Boymlgreen has promised re-asphalt the court once the work is completed.

A spokesman for the construction company building the condo, Allis Construction, said completion was still 18 months away. "It's not going to get torn down, but we're not sure if it's going to be shut down through the winter," he said of the handball courts, but estimated spring 2005. On the upside, he said, new basketball courts would be opening in 10 days.

J.J. Byrne Park was the first home field, then called Washington Park, for the Bridge Dodgers (later the Brooklyn Dodgers) after Charlie Ebbets' purchase of the team in 1898. That day have been the last time the park was recognized as an athletic destination, and is otherwise mainly recognized for its historical significance. War landmark Old Stone House.

ings — will be a legally binding contract, they did not specify what penalties would be issued for violations of the terms, and acknowledge that there is no independent body providing oversight.

Committing that the development was "more than just talking jobs, housing and other benefits for the people of Brooklyn."

Among the benefits discussed at the press conference was the creation of a health center and "intergenerational facility, both of which were advocated by Daughtry, as well as job training programs and a promise to hire one journeyman trainee construction worker for every four journeymen hired, in an effort to open union jobs to area residents.

Ratner promised Daughtry's ideas would be introduced to the in-progress negotiations for the CBA, but Ratner spokesman Joe DePlascio, said the details of the health clinic and intergenerational facility had not been decided, and they could end up being one facility.

Daughtry said he resigned as chairman of the DBLC because the group failed to recognize a "good faith" attempt by Ratner to pull them into the negotiations.

"It was ours to respond to and I thought that at least we needed to move ahead," he said at a community meeting on Tuesday night.

At the same meeting Daughtry told those in attendance that he was still "out of the loop," but was ready to take action on behalf of the community. "I won't be left out," he said. "I can fight and not be accused of being an outsider."

UNDERGROUND...

Continued from page 6

Chattel said she moved into the house, where her husband had grown up, and remembered hearing him say there was once a room behind an area now sealed off with cinderblocks.

"They told me about it one time, but I forgot that until this came up," she said. Chotel also told LaRoche that, as a descendant of the abolitionist and former slave Frederick Douglass, she knew something about the area where he'd come to speak several times.

"There was a minstrel show, a few blocks over," Chotel said, and mentioned that the African Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church, which used to have its congregation at 311 Bridge St. was very active in the abolitionist movement.

With members as Tubman, Douglass and Sojourner Truth, African Methodist Episcopal churches helped to spearhead Northern sepa-

ratism from the antebellum South.

Chattel claims to have heard that when the church was sold to Polytechnic University in 1968, a man who was moving was in the basement when his foot fell through, and he discovered a room filled with cots and wall etchings of faces.

"They found beds and stuff underneath there," confirmed Vincent Batista, president of the nearby Institute of Design and Construction. "There's a former basement, but that's another basement," he said, underlining it.

Greenstein and Chotel suspect that may be the case with their buildings, as well, but LaRoche warned them it would require major excavation and time before anything could be determined.

"Black history in New York [is] under-studied, and within that, the topic of the Underground Railroad is under-studied in itself," LaRoche said.

"It's a very difficult area of research to study, because in part it's very painful," she said.

LETTERS / FIX IS IN...

Continued from page 6

sultants, players, construction unions or construction contractors who also support building a new Nets arena?

"There are other avenues lobbyists can use to influence elected officials such as Markowitz. Consider the age-old tradition of purchasing access and support by taking tickets or dinner journal ads to local political clubhouse or Kings County Democratic Party fundraising events. All of these activities could appear to be more than a coincidence."

How many other members of the City Council and other elected officials face this moral dilemma?

All borough presidents and members of the City Council should want to avoid conflicts of interest.

Preserve the integrity of public office and come clean with voters — make public and return any campaign contributions from the Nets and their affiliates.

— Larry Penner, Great Neck, Long Island

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All letters must be signed and include the writer's home address and phone number (only the writer's neighborhood and street name are published with the letter).

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Marty should let Witnesses move

To the editor:

Once again, the president of the Borough of Brooklyn proves to be unfair in his examination of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's plans to erect a new building for its members in the DUMBO area of Brooklyn ("Marty gives thumbs down to Witnesses plan," Brooklyn Papers, Sept. 25).

Watchtower has already announced its plans to re-house many of its members in the DUMBO section, and to sell some of its older established buildings in Brooklyn Heights. This plan, if carried out, would be a boon to local residents, especially seniors, in Brooklyn. We have all seen their charming buildings on Columbia Heights, and we know that the Bossert on Montague Street would provide desirable homes for seniors.

Brooklyn politicians should be encouraging this change.

Many seniors are stuck in old, crowded quarters, some paying more than they can afford, yet we all love living in Brooklyn.

The state Division of Housing should be observing the Watchtower moves. They should try to locate independent housing advocates or senior citizen groups willing to become involved in the interest of Brooklyn residents. Increasing the number of "affordable" apartments in Brooklyn is a goal worth striving for. But maintaining the shortage of such apartments is not in the interest of Brooklyn residents.

We want our state to be fair to the Watchtower people and to residents of Brooklyn all at the same time!

— Clara Aris, Brooklyn Heights

Continued from page 1

that the one-time vocal foe of such closed-door dealings had been, in their eyes, co-opted.

"None of these negotiating groups represent Prospect Heights, where the project would be located," charged Daniel Goldstein, a spokesman for the anti-arena group Develop-Don't Destroy Brooklyn. Goldstein would lose his condominium apartment to the arena plan.

"Revered Daughtry said at Ratner's press conference that Bruce Ratner is honorable, caring, trustworthy and generous. Pardon us if we don't think that's a tough negotiating stance."

Prospect Heights Councilwoman Letitia James, who championed the anti-Atlantic Yards case early on, said Daughtry's joining the CBA talks helps make it appear as though Ratner has the community on his side.

"This is nothing more than an attempt to divide and conquer the Downtown and Central Brooklyn community," she said. James, a member of the Downtown Brooklyn Leadership Coalition, a group of political leaders and clergy formed by Daughtry last year in response to the Atlantic Yards plan, said the \$2.5-billion Ratner plan is dependent upon the state's condemnation of more than two square miles of privately owned property and negotiating the purchase of air rights over Metropolitan Transportation Authority rail yards.

When Ratner appeared with Daughtry this week, his staff and supporters made it clear that the

real estate mogul's outreach to a local clergy member was indicative that his company was committed to involving the community.

Though Daughtry will be the first clergy member represented in the CBA negotiations, Forest City Ratner Vice President Jim Stuckey invited members of the DBLC to take a seat at the bargaining table with Ratner.

At a Sept. 30 meeting at the

Hanson Place Central United Methodist Church in Fort Greene, Stuckey reiterated his offer, telling a table of DBLC members and a 200-person audience that had gathered to decry the exclusion of the community from decision-making in Ratner's project, that "the seat is waiting for you."

The Rev. Dennis Dillon, who took Daughtry's place as chair-

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